

This year saw the 26th running of the Aberdeen Boat Club's Four Peaks Race, with Aedas back (after missing a year) as principal sponsor. The course, from Tai Tam, had all crews heading for Sai Kung to ascend Ma On Shan (702m) and then splitting: Division A boats sailed to Lamma for Mt Stenhouse (353m), Lantau for Lantau Peak (934m), then back to Repulse Bay for Violet Hill (433m) before sprinting to the finish off Middle Island; Division B



messy start, although there were no recalls or protestable offences.

Some 10 minutes late, Division B entry, *Vector*, nevertheless charged valiantly on with seven on deck, looking ready for almost anything. Unfortunately the weather proved too much and, after an epic struggle to clear Sai Kung pier against the wind, at around 2100 *Vector* started its iron topsail and retired. Steve Metz's *Koala*, also Div B, retired before even landing runners in Sai Kung, thanks to the dreaded *mal de mer*.

and stopping it dead in the water. After a brief dunking, the man overboard was retrieved and *Black Jack's* race continued.

Lone catamaran, *ATE*, put on an impressive display with six runners on the top of Ma On Shan, an unconfirmed record.

Former ABC commodore, Jon Zinke, served his twelfth year as Ma On Shan peak control, posing the question of would he feel more at home joining a mountaineering or fell walking club.

Clearing Sai Kung, the fleet sailed into the night, and across the shipping lanes. With Division B now down to two

boats, *Rhapsody* experienced sudden gear



For the slower Div B boats, given time limits and cut-offs, this was a way to improve their chances of finishing . . . and getting in four hill climbs.

So, in gusty conditions on Saturday, the 24th of January, 15 boats gathered at the entrance to Tai Tam Bay to compete in one of Hong Kong's most challenging sporting events — the multi-discipline Four Peaks Race.

On the committee boat, race officer Stephen Davies opted for shorter courses for both divisions, thanks to a British weather site that predicted an overnight ease . . . correctly as it turned out. The shorter courses still have the same number of peaks..

A long line and plenty of wind made for a somewhat

The first five boats to reach Sai Kung, arrived within five minutes of each other, showing the fiercely competitive nature of the Division A fleet. *Wicked*, skippered by Tristan Stewart, executed a textbook drop-off which drew admiration from

both race officials and competitors alike. *Black Jack* then rewrote the textbook by staging an impromptu keel hauling! While still making five knots through the water, a very keen runner stepped on to the inflatable dinghy being towed alongside, driving the bow below the surface, flooding the whole thing



failure forcing it out of the race, leaving *GA* as the only Div B boat on the water — a guaranteed winner on completion.

Mt Stenhouse peak control, caught off guard by the strong

wind and speed of the lead boats, found themselves in a mad dash to get to Lamma Island and reach the summit in time to monitor the race leaders. To their credit, and relief of the

Aedas Four Peaks Race

Sail repairs (left top), determined paddlers (left above) and *Darling* leaves Tai Tam (right)



23 & 24 JANUARY 2010

race committee, the Hong Kong Sea School were in place and ready when the first competitors arrived.

Red Kite II arrived at Lamma

in excellent time, its blistering pace on the water beaten only by one other competing boat. However, due to some unorthodox navigation, the A35 found

itself in the wrong drop-off bay and its shore team stayed long enough to watch several other boats depart for Lantau before them.

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Continued from previous page —

The Lantau Beach Patrol, led by ABC general manager, Philippe de Manny, was kept on its toes throughout the race, due in no small part to the consignment of Lantau Gate to the annals of history. With the gate requirement dropped, skippers were sending shore teams in along the length of the beach, hoping for some slight tactical advantage. Two thirds of the LBP were last seen in a Lantau restaurant drinking champagne and singing loudly in French. We shall remember them.

Sunrise on Sunday saw *Wicked* taking line honours, a

good 25 minutes ahead of rivals *Red Kite II*. *The Farr Side* once again proved a force to be reckoned with, the 30-year-old Bruce Farr-designed yacht and its well-seasoned (or marinated) crew won Division A HKPN on corrected time.

Kei Lun completed the course in under 21 hours earning it a podium position in HKPN.

Meanwhile, Violet Hill peak control fell foul of roving Agriculture, Fisheries & Conservation Department

officers who demanded the removal of an 'illegal structure' . . . the Four Peaks Race banner. Apparently the ABC had failed to



Violet Hill peak control (below), rowing ashore (right top) and clambering aboard (right below)



400, *Darling*, rounded off the fleet, finishing well within the official cut-off time and raising HK\$50,000 for its chosen charity. But, after all the numbers were fed into the computer, the overall IRC winner was *Whiskey Jack*, despite picking up a couple of penalties on its way around.

apply in advance for a building permit. There's already talk of next year renaming the peak control Violet Hill Squatter Camp.

Talkinghead sailed a clean race, without any penalties, finishing mid fleet in HKPN and 7th in IRC. *Taxi* and *Tipsy Frenz* finished within 15 minutes of each other after racing for 27 hours. The Hanse

