

Wild Oats XI wins fifth Big Boat crown

- From: AAP
- December 13, 2011



Wild Oats XI on Sydney Harbour for the Big Boat Challenge. Source: Getty Images

WILD Oats XI capitalised on another spinnaker issue for supermaxi rival Investec Loyal to secure a fifth Big Boat Challenge win in lively conditions on Sydney Harbour.

The five-time Sydney-to-Hobart line honours winner completed the 14-nautical mile course in one hour seven minutes and nine seconds, nearly three minutes ahead of Investec Loyal.

Two-time Sydney-to-Hobart line honours winner Wild Thing, in her new black livery, was third across the line another five minutes back, despite racing against time to repair damage suffered in a storm yesterday.

The fleet of 15 had a good workout in south-to-southwesterly breezes of between 18 and 23 knots.

Investec Loyal skipper and owner Anthony Bell felt problems with their furling spinnaker, which also occurred at the Hamilton Island regatta earlier in the year, cost his boat one and a half to two minutes.

He also felt they didn't lose any time to Wild Oats XI over the second half of the race.

"It was a good healthy competition, the trip around the course was a fast one today, I think everyone probably enjoyed it," Bell said.

"If our furling system starts to work at some stage, we might actually shade one of these races."

Wild Oats XI may still have been too quick for a trouble-free Investec Loyal, with skipper Mark Richards describing the race as "good fun".

"It's a real challenge getting the big boats around the race track," Richards said.

"It was really hard work but the guys did a fantastic job."