

## Lahana skipper hoping for heavy weather

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The skipper of Sydney to Hobart maxi Lahana is hoping heavy weather will produce a level playing field in this year's race.

Lahana has finished second, third and fourth across the line in the great race, competing under three different names in her colourful history.

Last year, she finished third, just under three hours behind Investec LOYAL and six and a half hours behind winner Wild Oats XI.

The main difference between those boats and Lahana is she has a fixed keel and the other two have canting keels.

"That sets us back a bit in terms of straight line speed, but we're always hopeful for heavier upwind conditions," Lahana skipper Peter Millard told AAP.

"That means everyone is sort of equalised a little bit, like it is in wet weather rugby."

Millard isn't concerned about the rock star crews and the financial resources enjoyed by her main rivals.

He espouses the old-fashioned Corinthian amateur attitude towards the sport.

"We fundamentally enjoy that we can go sailing with a whole lot of friends and mates from around the yacht clubs around the Harbour and around Australia," Millard said.

"We enjoy the fact that we run on manpower rather than stored hydraulic power and that's part of the enjoyment that we have of trying to stay as close as possible to the 100-footers.

"When they are sailing with their fingers on the button, we know that we've got 20-odd guys that have got to basically grind their way and put in the huge human effort that is required to put one of these big boats around the racecourse offshore."

Millard believed a boat sailed on Corinthian values could still be competitive.

"I'd like to think so or otherwise we'd all sort of stay and play backyard cricket and watch the Boxing Day Test," Millard joked.

"First and foremost we're out there to do the best we can and stay as close to the big boys as we can and be there for any opportunity that comes up."

Millard felt Lahana probably had a better chance of taking out overall handicap honours.

"A strong upwind race and we think our boat has a good opportunity of a sound handicap IRC overall result," Millard said.

"If the conditions suit the big boats then Lahana can certainly be towards the front of the pack."

Meanwhile three boats - Hooligan, Loki and Shogun V - were tied for first after the first day of the Rolex Trophy Rating Series.