

Giants to battle for throne

JAMES BRESNEHAN | January 02, 2012 12:01am [Font size:](#) [A](#) [A](#) [A](#) [Email article:](#) [✉](#)

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A SUPERMAXI showdown is looming on the Derwent this afternoon as Wild Oats XI and Lahana go head-to-head for line honours in the annual King of the Derwent yacht race.

It will be the first time two supermaxis have raced in the KOD, and both 100-footers are making their race debut in Hobart.

The two ocean-racing giants finished second and third respectively in the 67th Sydney-Hobart last week, with Wild Oats trailing line honours winner Investec Loyal to the finish by just 3min8sec, while Lahana was 6hrs17min back.

It is the first time Wild Oats has rung in the new year in Hobart since her first Sydney-Hobart in 2005.

Since then the Sydney-Hobart record holder has left Kings Pier within a day or two of finishing to contest other races on the Eastern Seaboard.

Skipper Mark Richards said Oats was just plain unlucky in its ocean duel with Investec Loyal in the latest addition of the Hobart, and she would be back later this year to attempt a sixth line honours win.

"It was a fantastic race," Richards said.

"We really enjoyed the contest and we had to work our butts off to get here and unfortunately we came in second. But they sailed Loyal very well."

Richards said the Oats was beaten by a better crew.

"We were very unlucky in a few situations, but those guys did a great job," he said.

"When it came to the crunch they were a little bit quicker downwind in light air and they managed to keep their nose in front and get to the line first.

"We thought we still had a chance with 100m to go, that's the way the team is, we don't give up until the death."

Wild Oats spent hours drifting with no wind.

"We ran out of wind three times and Loyal just sailed around us," he said.

"The wind is sometimes hard to predict, but that's all part of sailing."

The King of the Derwent fleet will start mid-river at 2pm while the cruising division will start off Castray Esplanade at 2.10pm.

The race is twice around a course with rounding marks off Castray Esplanade, Sandy Bay, another south of John Garrow Light and Puncnis Reef off Howrah.

A large fleet of spectator craft is expected to follow the fleet while good views of the race can be had from ashore at Castray Esplanade, Battery Point, the Casino and the Battery at Lower Sandy Bay.

First held in 1979, the King of the Derwent is the final race for the Ocean Racing Club of Victoria's Sovereign Series for yachts in the Melbourne-Hobart Westcoaster race and the Salamanca Series for boats that contest the East Coaster.



Wild Oats XI

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


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