

Print Email Facebook Twitter More

Investec LOYAL celebrates after protest dismissed

Updated December 29, 2011 20:15:57



Investec LOYAL has been confirmed as line honours winner of this year's Sydney to Hobart yacht race after an international jury ruled it did not breach race rules by asking the ABC helicopter for an update on its rival's sail set-up.

The race committee had lodged a protest against the supermaxi last night for allegedly asking a third party for assistance during the race.

But after deliberating for nearly three hours this morning, the race jury dismissed the protest.

"It's very relieving to actually get to this point," Bell said after he emerged from the hearing earlier today.

"It [last night's win] was a great moment that got cut short, but in saying that I'd prefer that, if there was a question mark, that it be dealt with properly with a process like this."

The crew of Investec LOYAL had asked the crew of the ABC helicopter to tell them what sail Wild Oats XI was using when the yachts were just off Merimbula on the NSW south coast.

In an audio recording Investec LOYAL tactician Michael Coxon is heard asking: "Can you confirm, does Wild Oats have their trysail up? What colour is the sail, the mainsail they've got up?"

Coxon is a sail manufacturer who sold the mainsail to Wild Oats XI and had argued he merely wanted to know if his sail was holding up in the conditions.

RELATED STORY: Sydney-Hobart race win in doubt

AUDIO: Interview: LOYAL skipper Anthony Bell (ABC News)

AUDIO: Race jury dismisses protest against Investec LOYAL (ABC News)

MAP: Australia



VIDEO: Anthony Bell speaks to reporters after Sydney-Hobart verdict (ABC News)

Bell says the decision took longer than expected.

"It's sort of the long way around in some ways. It's very relieving to actually get to this point. There's rules in every sport," he said.

The LOYAL crew were later presented with the Illingworth trophy at Constitution Dock.

Each crew member was cheered by the crowd when they received separate medallions marking their win. The official cup was awarded to Bell.

Investec LOYAL crossed the finish line at Constitution Dock on Wednesday evening, just three minutes and eight seconds ahead of Wild Oats XI.

Investec LOYAL would have faced possible disqualification or a time penalty if it was found to be in breach of race rules.

Deserved

Wild Oats XI skipper Mark Richards had already said he believed Investec LOYAL deserved the win.

"There were three stages to the race where we had a really big lead and we lost it, had no wind at all and they sailed around us," Richards said.

"They did a fantastic job and we congratulate those guys. We'll have to come back next year and have another crack."

Saying that a hearing last night would have been unfair to emotional and fatigued crew members, he said: "I think we should all go and get emotional and fatigued now."

Ten yachts have now finished the Sydney to Hobart yacht race.

The NSW yacht Ichi Ban was the seventh to cross the finish line, closely followed by Victorian boat Calm.

Jazz and Ragamuffin crossed the line minutes later.



Search ABC News

ABC Grandstand Sport

- Aussies hold advantage after pace blitz
- As it happened: Second Test Day One
- Day One Summary: Australia v India
- Murray lurches to first victory in Brisbane
- Heat go down to Strikers
- Bartoli serves Gajdosova double bagel

Featured Video

- The ABC's North America correspondent Lisa Miller reports on the frontrunners of the Republican presidential race more than 18 years ago in a racist attack that shocked Britain.
- North Korea has staged a massive rally in support of new leader Kim Jong-un.
- Video from Syria appears to show protesters appealing to Arab League observers to hear their stories.
- Regional tensions continue to rise as Iran test-fires a cruise missile in the Persian Gulf.
- Police have arrested a man suspected of 53 arson attacks in Los Angeles.

Got a news tip?

If you have inside knowledge of a topic in the news, contact the ABC News Online Investigative Unit.

ABC News Online Investigative Unit

Join us on Facebook

Follow us on Twitter