

HEADLINES A surfer has survived a shark attack on the NSW Central Coast, paddling away with wounds to his arm.

sky NEWS
.com.au

NEWS BUSINESS EXTRA PROGRAMS VIDEO CONNECT ON AIR
TOP STORIES LOCAL NATIONAL WORLD POLITICS SPORT WEATHER

Investec Loyal cleared of cheating

Updated: 19:54, Thursday December 29, 2011

The Investec LOYAL crewman cleared of asking a helicopter pilot for help during the Sydney to Hobart race has described the episode as 'silly'.

LOYAL tactician Michael Coxon was the subject of a protest lodged by the race committee on Wednesday, when the supermaxi dramatically upset rival Wild Oats XI to cross the finish line first.

Coxon was heard asking an ABC pilot about Wild Oats' sails after being woken to do a radio interview with the broadcaster on Tuesday morning.

An international jury accepted that Coxon was genuinely concerned about how the sails had fared after a bruising night of 30-knot winds because his company, North Sails, had supplied them.

'I would hope perhaps there's a lesson to be learned here, a simple phone call (would have cleared it up),' he told AAP after LOYAL was belatedly presented with the JH Illingworth Trophy on Thursday afternoon.

'My question was purely one of interests and concern ... nothing to be gained for me, and it was being misconstrued unfortunately.

'Although we're competitors on the race track, they're very, very good clients of mine and very good friends.

'I obviously had an interest in how the development new sail was going.

'Really it was silly, it was very, very silly and I'm just pleased that it was found that way.'

Wild Oats was using a new \$200,000 sail product known as 3Di and originally developed by the America's Cup syndicate Alinghi.

Coxon says he was mystified when LOYAL skipper Anthony Bell handed the protest documents at the finish.

The boat remained in the Derwent for an hour after finishing before Bell emerged with Coxon's side of the story.

'I'm a professional in this industry for 35 years and normally if you're a bit close to the wind you'll know and have a feeling of it,' Coxon said.

'I was completely dumbfounded and surprised by it.

The 54-year-old admitted to some nerves as the LOYAL hierarchy headed to the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania for the hearing, and plenty of relief at the outcome.

'I had no problems in myself because I knew in my heart there was no wrongdoing,' Coxon said.

'You never want to be involved in a protest because a protest is a 50-50 chance which way it's going to go.'

Bell credited his tactician with getting LOYAL into a position to challenge for line honours.

'We got to where we did in this race because of Michael Coxon,' the skipper said.

'Win, lose or draw, Michael had a hundred per cent of my support, he had a hundred per cent of the team's support.'

Hundreds of spectator boats and thousands on the shoreline created a buzz after the fourth closest finish in race history, only for it to be short-circuited by the protest.

Commodore of the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia, Garry Linacre, said changes to the process were unlikely because teams needed time to overcome fatigue.

'I don't see any need for a change (to the rules),' he said.

'Possibly we can find better ways of handling this governance requirement in the future that is more timely.'



Liverpool accept Suarez eight-match ban
Inconsistent Clijsters edges Ivanovic
No Beckham but Ancelotti ready for lift
Aussies set for big Brisbane Intl day
Hodges ready to fire for Broncos in NRL
Quade Cooper banned from Old pub

Latest Stories

09:14 AM:
Iowa starts 2012 White House contest

09:14 AM:
Iowa starts 2012 White House contest

09:11 AM:
Support drops for Vic coalition

09:05 AM:
CSG mining in forest review - Santos

08:55 AM:
CSG mining in forest review - Santos