Raja Muda Selangor International Regatta 2024

Last week I had an amazing experience participating in the 34th RMSIR, sailing on AfterShock.
Firstly, I should mention that I had no experience on racing yachts before the regatta. My racing experience was limited to Hobie 16s, and my yachting experience was primarily cruising.
AfterShock is a 60 ft race yacht charter based in Phuket. Most onboard had sailed this boat before, but not necessarily at the same time.
I was introduced to members of the AfterShock team on Friday afternoon at RSYC, and also met the other newcomer, Yiyang. A practice sail had been planned, but it was decided the strong current and the number of boats in the marina would make this task too difficult. Instead, Yiyang and I were given a tour of the boat and our positions were assigned. I would be working on the bow with Saskia. This sounded perfect for me, then I saw the sails. Eek, the sails were massive, they all looked so similar, and all needed to be ready to go at all times, and no furler!
We set sail on Saturday with beautiful conditions. This long leg From Klang to Pangkor gave me a chance to get to know the other sailors, and begin learning more about AfterShock. We missed most of the rain, so a successful but exhausting sail.

Our early arrival gave us time to enjoy Pangkor, and some time to prepare for the next sail.

Now off to Penang, again the conditions were great; we were leading the way, until we hit the fishing nets. And not just one net, but we became entangled in six fishing nets. The first few were cleared with the quick action of the seasoned crew. By the sixth net there was no option but send someone in for a swim. Bart quickly volunteered to take a look. It was more like a feel rather than a look, as the water was so murky and the sun had set hours before. We had nets around the keel, the rudder and the prop. Removal required more help, so Steve went into the water. The two worked together, feeling their way along the hull to free us from more net than imaginable. We were finally able to return to course. It was a quiet and somewhat somber end approaching Penang, as we had lost our position while we cleared the nets for those initially behind us.

Penang was my favorite port. I finally knew everyone and was feeling more comfortable with my assigned tasks. I represented AfterShock in the rickshaw races, but failed to drink the pre-race beer fast enough so with my late rickshaw start, I was unable to catch my challenger. It was all in good fun, and I got points for effort. The inshore racing in Penang was a whole new game. The length of the boat was suddenly magnified. I had not realized how difficult it was to hear from stern to bow. The number of sail changes quickly reminded me that this was not cruising. The timing of all onboard was incredible. I watched reactions being made without verbal communication or discussion - the team acting as one. The day ended in rain, but this did not dampen the mood. We placed third in our class, which is remarkable for a charter boat with two newbies in the mix.

From Penang to Langkawi we had three new crew join. Having another knowledgable sailor on the bow eased the sense of urgency for me to react so quickly. I was able to ask more questions and understand the decisions and reactions. This leg gave me knowledge I would keep. I probably did the least active sailing, but I will remember so much from this sail. The conditions were not ideal, and we faced storms with lightning and 45 kts of wind. Again I was impressed with the ease and calm the team managed the boat in the storm, placing us second in our class for this passage.

The inshore racing in Langkawi was another beautiful display of teamwork. We sailed well and the dynamic sailors onboard brought us to another third place win in our class.

I learned so much from this regatta: new sailing terms, boat parts I had never heard of, and to top it off the Australian lingo had me questioning my understanding. I had never used or heard of a snatch block before this sail. I know what it is now, and I also know there is a *good* snatch block and a *dodgy* snatch block on AfterShock. Luckily, I always fetched the good one, but this was pure luck. And who knew a code zero was a screecher? A “Mexican takedown” was also new to me; and there’s no time for an explanation when there’s a call to use this maneuver. So the best place for me was in the bow pulling the spinnaker through the hatch as quickly as I could. I can now say I have participated in a Mexican takedown but have not yet seen one.

It amazed me how everyone interacted seamlessly at times, especially during the inshore races. The cumulative sailing experience on this team was impressive. I am grateful for the patience shown and knowledge shared. My adventure is over, but I left with great memories, new friendships, and once again the realization that there’s always so much more to learn when sailing.