

Blind ambition steers race sailor 2

News

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HIS trusty guide dog Tiller might steer him on shore, but at sea Sydney sailor **Kirk Watson** will be playing a lead role in this year's Rolex Sydney to Hobart yacht race.

While TV celebrities, rock-star sailors and former champions from a range of sports will be jumping aboard for the potentially hazardous annual trek south, Watson is set to be the first blind sailor promoted from crewman to skipper in the history of the world-famous ocean race.

And while he regularly steers his own yacht in races on Sydney Harbour with his wife and daughter, feel sailor Watson will ensure his crew on the 52-footer Sailors with disAbilities (SWD) "play to their strengths".

"It's a great honour being the skipper," said Watson, who has made it to the finish line in Hobart in five of his past eight attempts. "We can all do everything aboard but we play to our strengths." The only downside to a Sydney to Hobart campaign is Watson must spend time away from Tiller, who normally accompanies him on his own yacht but has to stay behind for the race.

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