

2007 TAIPAN & CAPRICORN NATIONAL TITLES

Hosted by McCRAE YACHT CLUB



The Taipan and Capricorn classes are a fantastic combination of high performance world class racing and a social event that caters for sailors of all ages and their families. At the National Titles men, women and kids together enjoy a memorable week of sailing and socialising with friends and family.



Mark Braithwaite reaches across the finish line, sailing with his daughter Sophia.

The 2007 Taipan & Capricorn National Titles were held on Port Phillip Bay, off the beach of McCrae Yacht Club. 53 boats attended the Nationals, including a record high 27 cat-rigged Taipans. This is indicative of the strength of the cat-rigged Taipan class in Victoria and across Australia in general. The race committee and competitors were all kept on their toes by the light winds, which constantly tested the patience and composure of the sailors. A total of 9 races were completed over the week, and the sailing combined with great social activities, good fleet numbers and plenty of happy faces combined to create a great event.



Liam Goodall (above) and Les Porter (below) looking comfortable on their cat-rigged Taipans. Note the lack of wind on the water, but the boats are still responsive and flighty.



Conditions for the invitation race were ideal as a warm-up race to iron out any wrinkles and size up the competition. 10-15 knots with the occasional gust between 15-20 knots from the South-East allowed for exciting sailing without too many problems. TCAA sailing under the championship rules doesn't normally include a reaching leg; however demand from some of the fleet led to the inclusion of a reaching course for the invitation race. Following an enjoyable afternoon race, sailors and their families enjoyed a fantastic welcome dinner with plenty of drinks and conversation about the week that was about to unfold.



Races 1 and 2 were held in light and fluky conditions that resulted in delight for some who achieved good race results, and frustrations for others who didn't quite find the breeze on the course. Controversy followed over whether or not there was sufficient wind on the course for the races. As a result race 2 was abandoned for divisions 1 and 3 only. The racing schedule was amended to ensure that the committee and sailors alike could take advantage of favourable wind conditions throughout the rest of the series.

The wind almost blew tents down overnight (which we would later find to be the normal pattern for the week) and 3 races were held on day 2. The first race began at midday, however the North/North-East wind faded to only allow 1 race before lunch. Sailors waited onshore and enjoyed the club facilities and socialising before the sea breeze arrived late in the afternoon, allowing for two exciting races in a building breeze. This was the only joy in the series for the crews who favoured heavy winds however, and the light-wind crews showed their determination to hang in throughout these two races. One thing is

certain about catamaran sailing; when the wind blows everyone gets high on adrenaline, and the race results become less influential on the mood of the sailors. It's fleet racing and it's fast; what more could you want in a sailing race.



Steve and Lesley Keily sailed well in the 4.9 Sloop division to finish 4th overall in the regatta.

Another certainty is that with the following day being New Years Eve there was going to be large-scale consumption of beer, bubbly and rum. So for New Year Eve racing was scheduled to start at 9:30am to ensure everyone was off the water early. It was all to no avail as the wind died and racing was abandoned. No one was too disappointed however because the horizontal bungy was set up onshore for plenty of laughs and a few bruises. For those who haven't seen it horizontal bungy involves running over slippery plastic, with a heavy rubber coil attached around your waist. The aim is to run as far down the plastic as possible, but the end result for everyone is always the same – the bungy wins. Bungy is a great laugh and creates the opportunity for participants to win a bottle of grog in return for their efforts. The night that followed can best be described as blurry after too many rum shots warmed the inside of my throat and belly.



Horizontal bungee is always good entertainment for both competitors and spectators.

The race committee declared that no racing would be held on New Years Day and would you believe it – there was wind all day. We have all had regattas where the wind was good leading into and following the regatta, but poor to average throughout the series. This series was one of those, except that the wind also blew on the only day through the series that we didn't race. Mother Nature just wasn't on our side. It could have been a lot worse though, with the professional and excellent race committee still completing a 9 race series.

Wind on the following day allowed for four races. Division 2 raced only three of these, meaning all divisions had completed 8 races with one day of sailing remaining. The results were shared around over the four races, which set the stage for a crucial final day of racing to decide the winners in all three divisions. Back onshore after the racing, the TCAA committee held their annual fundraiser auction. Massive thanks must be given to Australian High Performance Catamarans (AHPC), ZHIK, Ashby Sailcraft and Victorian Sailing Supplies (VSS). Sailors got the opportunity to snap up some bargains while at the same time contributing towards the TCAA fundraiser.



Peter Scott and his daughter won the prize of best looking boat on their Taipan 5.7, Abby Normal

Two races were scheduled for the final day of racing, with one more result meaning two drop races would be included in the results. The ninth race was completed in very light winds to the delight of some sailors in need of the second drop race. Race 10 was started but later abandoned as again the wind died out to nothing. Boats were either towed or paddled back to shore and put on trailers, before sailors and their families primed up for the presentation dinner. Everyone ate, drank and drank some more through the night, and enjoyed a wonderful event. Thanks to The Victorian TCAA committee for all their efforts in organising a great event.



Every year there are a few standout competitors who achieve excellence either on the water or in the social activities. This year the following people stood up to be recognised:

- In the Capricorn and Taipan 5.7 division local 15 year old Oliver McKeon (although he looks 23 years old so I would love to see the steroid chickens his mum was feeding him) and Dave Parker mixed in with the big boys and sailed well to get some great results.
- In the cat-rigged Taipan 4.9 division Warrick Lyon won the series, knocking off both Dennis Baker and Noel Grellet who had established a bit of a 1st/2nd domination over the cat-rigged fleet prior to this event. Other notable mentions go to George Hooper (3rd) and Liam Goodall (5th). Finally, Liam's girlfriend stood out amongst the crew of ugly sailors for completely non-sailing merits.
- In the 4.9 sloop division Cam Hooper and Chris Lane stole the show. These guys drove from DARWIN for the event with a combined crew weight of about 100kgs and blitzed the fleet with four 1sts from nine races in the series. To rub salt into the wound Cam then impressed the crowd with some amazing dancing that made the women fall to his feet. Gordon Barrett and Jenni Duthie also sailed well to snare a win in the first race of the series.