

**Wildcat Regatta – October 4-6, 2008**  
*Fast and Fun*

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The Wildcat Regatta hosted by Great Lakes Sailing Club (GLSC) over the October long weekend was a successful event that lived up to its reputation as a premier annual catamaran regatta. The event is generally regarded as a warm up regatta to test new equipment, unveil new boats and catch up with friends. The weekend also proves valuable as the early form guide to identify sailors to beat in the coming season.



Being someone who grew up sailing at Great Lakes Sailing Club the Wildcat Regatta is a special event with sentimental bias, but there's still nothing more satisfying to me than sitting on the park bench with a cold beer watching the sun set over Wallis Lake after a fun day of competitive racing.

The Wildcat Regatta is an annual pilgrimage for many keen catamaran sailors with people traveling to this year's event from NSW, Queensland, Victoria and even Fiji. According to long time stalwart Andrew (Willy) Williams "*It's a regatta you just can't miss*". Willy has attended the event for 15 years straight and doesn't intend to stop any time soon. He, along with many other regulars are committed to supporting the event each year, regardless of the boat they are sailing or other events that may be happening.

Ten sloop rigged Taipans enjoyed excellent class racing in what was the first regatta to test the new square top mainsails against other square top sails. All the major suppliers of Taipan sails were represented and there didn't seem to be any difference between the boats, with good boat speed displayed by all the new sails. Matt Homan and Chris "slater" Munro were definitely the fastest Taipan on the water, as the lads drove the boat harder than the rest of the fleet, not because their rig was faster.

Special mention should be made to Adam Erickson (first time Taipan sailor) and Ethan White (8 years of age) who teamed up on Ethan's dad's boat and got around the course very well. Ethan's fearless personality and enjoyment for the sport was impressive and he will certainly be a great crew and skipper in the future. It was also great to see the Kurnell boats skippered by Peter Lane and Rossco sailing well and showing massive improvements since they started sailing Taipans last year.



The Wildcat regatta is always a top class event thanks to the dedicated and hard working members of GLSC. A good addition this year was the free t-shirts given to all first time sailors at the event reading: *"Guess wot? I'm a Wildcat Virgin!"* Congratulations to all these entrants who have now lost their Wildcat virginity and GLSC looks forward to welcoming them back next year.

As a mid fleet punter I also enjoyed the privilege of sailing the Saturday with Australian Sailing's editor Vanessa Dudley on a Sloop rigged Taipan 4.9. The constant smiles and laughter proved that we teamed up pretty well to get the boat around the course without any real problems. It was also reassuring to see that even someone with extensive sailing experience on a range of boats got so much enjoyment skippering the Taipan.

Three races were held on Saturday in a breeze that was predominantly a 15 knot Southerly, with a few shifts and gusts up to 20 knots to keep the sailors on their toes. Race 1 was about 8 knots so conditions were good for those of us who were trying to get a feel for the boat again after a quiet winter. There was great racing in all divisions with fun sailing for those who were confident in the breeze.

Sunday was similar with three back-to-back races in a 10 to 15 knot Southerly wind on the flat water of Wallis Lake. Wind at the top mark was less than consistent and breeze lines flowed regularly through the course to create mixed moments of fame and frustration for sailors on the water. The results however didn't show any unexpected variations or inconsistencies, so overall it was fair racing in good breeze with the fastest sailors in each class taking home the winnings that were kindly donated by Kevlar and Renee of NB Laser & Hobie Sports.

With no races to be started after 1pm on Monday, unfortunately the wind arrived too late in the day and racing was abandoned on Monday. After a six race series the results were finalised. Congratulations to all the winners in their respective divisions with Special mention to Steve Brewin who won every race in a competitive A Class fleet, and thanks to Tim Haffner and the crew of Great Lakes Sailing Club for once again hosting a brilliant event.

As the weekend concluded Greg, Brett Ads and Kings loaded the boats up for what would become a 23 hour trip for Ads and Kings before reaching home. Just 1 hour into the trip we found ourselves in a traffic jam which wasn't a great start. Luckily we still had some bundy cans left over from the trip which eased the pain of the traffic jam slightly. As anyone would do in the same situation we decided to climb onto the top boat and enjoy the sunshine while we crawled along the freeway, only to hear an American accent from another car call out "*hey look, they're drinking on the boats*". We turned to see a car full of young women with one taking photos of us.



Brett ended up spending a couple of hours in a random car with 3 women, while Jen (a baseballer on scholarship from America) jumped in Greg's car with the rest of us. I know what you're thinking...bulls\*#. Ads happily traded my rash vest (which was a prize for the event) for Jen's baseball top, which will now become a Taipan perpetual trophy, and will be unveiled at the Belmont Nationals in 2009. I'll leave the story there and you can ask Brett how his fantasy of being in a random car with 3 women unfolded next time you see him...

