

Wind too strong for visiting skaters

SAILING

By HOLLY RANSON

DAVID Luck and Glenn Crichton came to Tasmania hoping to blow long-time rivals Max Sellars and Ben Sinton out of the water.

Instead it was the whole competition that was blown away yesterday, a 25-knot south-westerly, putting a premature end to the third heat of the Australian Skate Championships being sailed at Port Dalrymple Yacht Club.

With half of the fleet capped and one mainsail blown out, the race was abandoned soon after the start and the 30 sailors from NSW and Western Australia sent back to shore.

The two teams from St George's Sailing Club in Toronto, northern NSW, will now look to this afternoon's two heats to separate their scores.

They are locked in equal first after claiming a first and a second place each in the races held on December 30 and 31.

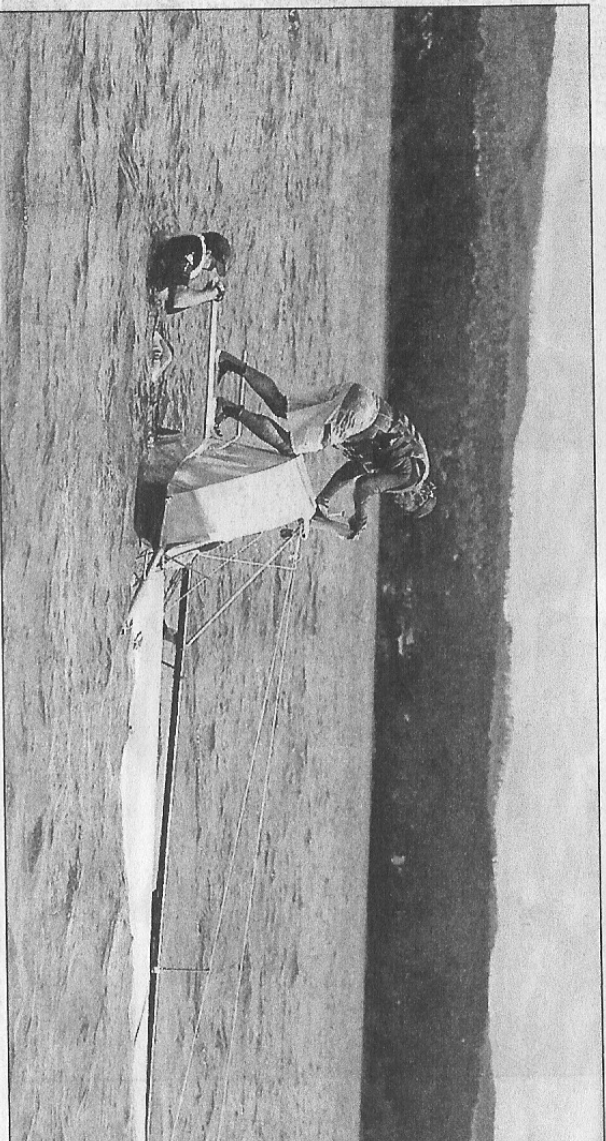
"The first two races were sailed in very light, variable conditions, so today was a big contrast," Crichton said yesterday.

"Because the race was abandoned we will have to sail two tomorrow, which will be a challenge."

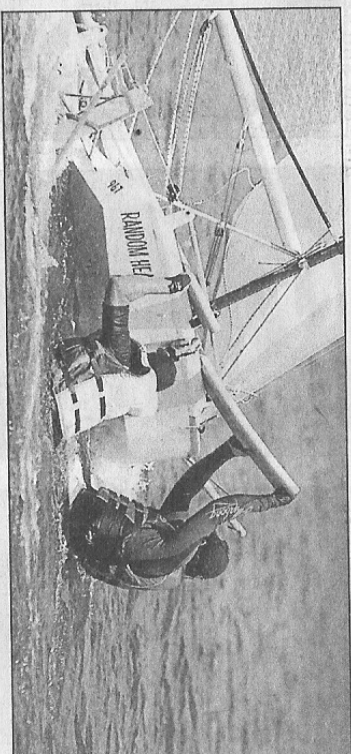
Defending national champions Luck and Crichton have won six of the classes' 52 previous national competitions. They are confident of overcoming their rivals and clubmates again in this regatta, which wraps up on January 6.



David Luck and Glenn Crichton, of Toronto, NSW, found conditions too rough.



Hayden Pauley and Dave Storey get a taste of the Tamar in the Australian skate titles after tipping over in the breeze.



Pauley and Storey apply a bit of muscle power . . . and successfully right the "ship".

Pictures: GEOFF ROBSON