

SKATES GO BACK TO WHERE IT ALL STARTED

By John Grant

The 55th Skate Nationals were hosted by the St. George Sailing Club, where the first Title was held in the 1957/58 season.

For the first time Skates sailed “up and back” courses located in the mouth of the Georges River and just into Botany Bay. Breezes ranged from three moderate to fresh north easterlies, one fresh southerly and two light easterlies. Heat 7 was abandoned when a strong southerly breeze and low tide presented difficult conditions.

“Any Which Way” sailed by David Luck and crewed by Glenn Crichton had an easy win in the series of six heats with five to count, they dropped a fourth to score 0 points. Their fourth came in the fresh N.E. Heat 4 when they got tangled up with a Kite Surfer whilst in the lead, on the first spinnaker reach. After dropping back further than 10th place they recovered to run 4th.

This makes eight wins for David Luck and he now holds the record for the most Australian Skate Championships, a record that he held jointly with a West Australian Skipper Gary Caporn before this series.

Second place was a close tussle between three boats with “Southern Fasteners” Max Sellars/Geoff Brooks beating “Woodland Metal Spinning” John Grant/David Crawford by 1.1 points and “Boneyard” Greg Patterson/Peter Howard a further 6.6 points back in fourth. “Boneyard” had the distinction of being the only boat to take a heat from the crew of “Any Which Way”.

Handicap Winner for the series was “Take It Easy” Michael Winney /Emma Sills. Emma was the crew for the Handicap winner last season “Sea Oyster” (WA) at the East Fremantle title. Veterans Trophy went to the crew of “Grey Ghost” father and son combination Keith and Chris Sinton.

Social activities included a Boxing Day Hobart Start Cruise, a Winery Tour of the Illawarra, a trip to the host Club’s parent club Manly Skiff Club and Barefoot Bowls on New Years Day.

Four West Australian boats came across by way of a rail container, the crews travelling by plane and being billeted by St. George members, all making the regular trip across the continent more affordable. Next years title will be in S.A.

First Ten Places:

1. Any Which Way - David Luck/Glenn Crichton (NSW) 0 points
2. Southern Fasteners - Max Sellars/Geoff Brooks (NSW) 22.0
3. Woodland Metal Spinning - John Grant/David Crawford (NSW) 23.1
4. Boneyard - Greg Patterson /Peter Howard (NSW) 29.7
5. Natural Juices 11 - Ken Davies/ Lachlan Schroder (NSW) 43.7
6. Take It Easy - Michael Winney/Emma Sills (NSW) 48.8
7. Grey Ghost - Keith Sinton/Chris Sinton (NSW) 63.4
8. Freeballing - Ben Pauley/Scott McGuire (NSW) 70.0
9. Whisper Norm - Ryan/Alan Beattie (NSW) 73.7
10. Getting Your End Wet - Brett Andrews/Sean Andrews (WA) 80.0