

**2009 OK BRASS MONKEY AMATEUR OPEN
NAPIER, QUEENS' BIRTHDAY WEEKEND 2009**

The inaugural Brass Monkey Amateur Open was held in Napier over Queens' Birthday weekend. As the final regatta before the 2009/2010 Ranking/Worlds Selection Series kicks off in Wellington in October, this was a great chance for NZ OK sailors to get some winter regatta training, test their latest gear developments and, of course, have a few rumpos with their mates. Marty Weeks and Brass Monkey Yachting took the opportunity to organise a fantastic, extremely well-run regatta, with excellent support provided by Napier Sailing Club personnel who gave of their holiday weekend to run races for us. All of the fleet are extremely grateful for that support.

Saturday dawned cold and clear with very little wind and glassy swells rolling in. Race 1 started in about 3 knots, which rapidly dropped to around 1 knot shortly after the start. Ben Morrison managed to pick up some left hand pressure and drift to the first mark with a good lead, which he held until the shortened race finished at the wing mark. Newcomer Kagen Weeks, son of Marty and younger brother of Josh, pulled out a stellar debut race to take second, followed by Josh Weeks in 3rd.

After an hour or so of drifting around on the glass, most of the fleet were surprised when the 5 minute gun was sounded for Race 2, astonished when the 1 minute gun went, and shocked when the race actually started in around 0.1 knots. This brought back unpleasant memories for those of us who attended the Poole debacle in 2004! After a start which resembled a windsurfer race, in which at least 70% of the fleet ought to have been yellow flagged for flagrant rocking except for the fact that there was no other way to get moving, the old campaigner Dave Hoogenboom emerged in front and held the lead until the finish of the shortened course. Alistair Deaves began to show his customary light air form and took second, while Adrian Mannering drifted over the line in 3rd.

After Race 2 a number of the fleet assumed racing would be over for the day and began sculling and paddling back to the clubhouse. Unfortunately for them, or perhaps for the rest of us, while the breeze never really increased above 1 knot the race committee banged two more races off before we headed for home in the dark at 5pm. Alistair Deaves won both races 3 & 4, and finished the day on 8 points with a huge overall lead. World Champion Karl Purdie began to fight his way back into contention with two 2nd places, while Greg Wright and Mike Wilde were 3rd in races 3 & 4.

At the end of Saturday, Deaves led with 8 points, Morrison 2nd with 22 and Purdie 3rd with 24. The forecast for Sunday was for cold, strong southerlies, with snow to 200m and up to 40 knots of breeze. It has to be said that the boys were looking a little nervous and the usual onslaught on the rum bottle was half-hearted at best!

A quick peek out the bedroom window on Sunday morning confirmed the situation: windy, cloudy, and cold. The hills were covered in snow and the sea looked angry. After a briefing in which we were warned of the dangers of hypothermia, we all proceeded to don every piece of gear we owned and put to sea in around 20 knots of breeze which had just arrived, fresh from the South Pole, in time for our races. The fun began almost immediately, with a few boats capsizing on the way out to the start in the rising gusts, some retiring and running for the showers without firing a shot.

Most of the fleet showed their mettle and started Race 5 in around 25 knots, those who started at the pin end immediately tacking and taking control, almost laying through to the first mark. Karl Purdie showed why he is the champ and led the whole way, followed by Luke O'Connell who sailed an excellent race to take 2nd, and Matt Stechmann looking dangerous with his new mast in 3rd. Dan Bush was 4th, after hitting a mark and being called on it by Stechmann. The irony of this became

apparent in the clubhouse later that evening when the day's videos were played on the big screen... and one Matthew Stechmann was caught on film blatantly ramming the first mark and continuing merrily on his way! Classic stuff.

Race 6, which turned out to be the final race, began in similar conditions and once again Purdie led throughout to take the win and the regatta. Morrison was 2nd for most of the race until on the final run he capsized and enjoyed a swim in the freezing water before finally righting his boat and finishing 3rd-to-last. Stechmann sailed another very solid race to take 2nd while Adrian Mannering came through to take 3rd.

At that point, with most of the fleet becoming seriously cold, the chequered flag was hoisted and racing was abandoned for the day, bringing the regatta to a close. While around half the fleet were prepared to man up and start another race, noone was complaining about the prospect of a hot shower and a cold rum and coke. With snow falling in the hills and the breeze showing no signs of dropping, the abandonment was a sensible decision.

At the finish, Purdie took out the inaugural Brass Monkey Amateur Open title and showed that he is in great form for the 2009 Worlds in Sweden. Deaves was second and Morrison was 3rd. First junior was Kagen Weeks, who finished on equal points with brother Josh and won on countback. Good to see some sibling rivalry alive and well in the class.

So, with just 4 months to go until the 2009/2010 NZOKDA Ranking/Worlds Selection Series commences, the NZ team is looking strong and motivated. Rig and sail development is ongoing and the free flow of information throughout the NZ fleet (but not outside it!) means that the NZ entries in the 2010 Worlds in Wellington will have the best possible chance of great results.

Excellent photos and videos from the 2009 Brass Monkey Amateur Open will shortly be posted at the following web address:

http://www.monkeysfist.co.nz/index.php?option=com_zoom&Itemid=68&catid=12



Leaving Napier...



New bow ornament for NZL530