

## **Excellent Conditions Prevail for ACT Flying Fifteen Championship**

In keeping with the ongoing celebrations for Canberra's centenary year, it was appropriate that excellent conditions for exciting and competitive racing prevailed for the 45<sup>th</sup> ACT Flying Fifteen International Championship held on Lake Burley Griffin over Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2013.

A new format involving 8 short races was a break from past practice of sailing a Series comprising up to 5 longer races. This format, coupled with the favourable winds with periodic stronger gusts, saw the yachts often racing in close company with different tactical decisions resulting in frequent changes of positions during the races. All the competitors enjoyed the new arrangements.

The Championship was won in emphatic style by Matt Owen and Andrew Reed sailing Deffcon 1 (GBR 3684). Matt recently acquired this yacht from Ireland with the intention of sailing it in the World Flying Fifteen Championship in Hong Kong over 2-8 November 2013. Unfortunately, due to transport delays, the yacht did not arrive in Australia in time for reshipment to Hong Kong for the Worlds, but Matt and Andrew will still be competing in Hong Kong sailing another yacht.

Second in the Championship were John Tracey and Craig Murphy sailing Wings (3662). They fought hard to stay within striking distance of Matt Owen and were rewarded with a win in Race 7 to add to their 5 second and one third placing.

Third place went to Robin Malpas and Duncan Jamieson sailing Super Snabb (3657). The securing of third and fourth places was in doubt until the final race with Glen Seeley and Guy Anderson sailing GT (3062) pushing Super Snabb all the way to the finish while Philip Parish and Les Kearney from the Mordialloc SC sailing Slightly Firmer (3526) were in with a chance until they were forced to retire from the final race to finish 6<sup>th</sup> overall. Peter Forster and Stuart Allan sailing Relience ffeighteen (3594) put in a consistent and commendable performance to finish the Championship in 5<sup>th</sup> position, and also take out the Handicap prize.

Five yachts competed for the Silver Trophy which went to GT with Richard Hart and Ian Chapman in Force Majeure (3059) taking second and Bruce McLennan and Greg Beardmore in Maybe Ffiji (2834) in third place.

Weather and wind conditions throughout the Championship were all that could have been asked for, given the sometimes unpredictable or frustrating sailing conditions that can prevail on Lake Burley Griffin.

The warning signal for Race 1 was sounded by Race Officer Ian Brokenshire on time at 11.00 on Saturday morning. The prevailing wind before the start was NNW of around 5 knots with a forecast for strengthening winds more from the NW. Course 1 was designated involving two windward and return legs and one triangle. A wind shift just before the start signal saw Deffcon 1 benefit immensely from being the only starter on port tack at the pin end and the Race was effectively over as soon as it had begun.

With the wind settling in from the NW and freshening at 10 knots plus, the start boat was moved to a new position for Race 2. These conditions, with gusts up to 20 knots, saw a few yachts having spinnaker problems and the forced retirement of one yacht following a port and starboard collision. For Race 3 prevailing weather conditions were much the same. Deffcon 1 again took line honours. Slightly Firmer took second place, their best for the Championship, while Force Majeure took advantage of a strong gust to finish in 3<sup>rd</sup> place just ahead of GT and Reliance ffighteen. Wings retired with a broken boom.

After re-fuelling on hamburgers, Session 2 commenced at 14.30 sailing a windward and return course.

For Race 4 the wind was still from the NW at 10-15 knots and gusting higher, resulting in some fast but incident free sailing. Super Snabb finished in second place, their best performance for the Championship while an incident at the start disadvantaged GT and they recorded their worst finish for the Championship. After holding fourth place for nearly all the race, on the final run Wings (with a replacement boom) took advantage of a strong gust and surged past Slightly Firmer in the last 200 metres to secure third spot.

During Race 5 the wind began to ease. Deffcon 1 hit the front by mark 1 and was never challenged. Matt and Trish Gleeson sailing ffunnily enuff (3616) found the conditions to their liking and were in third position going into the final lap but were narrowly pipped at the post by GT and Reliance ffighteen to record a well-deserved fifth place.

With 5 races completed and the wind dropping the Race Officer called it a day. At this stage of the Championship, allowing for 1 drop, Deffcon 1 led with a score of 4, followed by Wings 9, GT and Slightly Firmer each on 16, Reliance ffighteen on 18 and Super Snabb on 19.

Session 3 of the Championship kicked off at 10.15 on Sunday and 3 races were sailed to complete the Series. The Race Officer opted to return to Course 1 and set the start line/finish close to shore almost in front of the CYC Race Tower, thus providing spectators with an America's Cup style view of the yachts.

While the Session started with a moderate NNW wind, the weather forecast for increasingly strong winds later in the morning proved to be the case.

In Race 6, Deffcon 1 led from start to finish and the order of those who followed across the line almost exactly reflected the final positions for the Championship.

By the time of the start for Race 7, the wind had picked up considerably to 15-18 knots with strong gusts over 20 knots accompanied by white caps on the Lake. Spectators witnessed some very fast sailing under spinnaker with the yachts up and planing on both the reach and run legs. For the first time in the Championship, on the first downwind leg, Deffcon 1 found itself lying in fourth place behind Wings, Super Snabb and Slightly Firmer with the rest of the fleet not far behind. While Deffcon 1 managed to turn at the gate just ahead of Slightly Firmer and caught Super Snabb on the beat back to mark 1, Wings was not to be denied and maintained its lead to the finish. Super Snabb finished a credible third followed by GT and Slightly Firmer.

Start of Race 7



Downwind Race 7



With one race left to go, third place in the Championship was still open between Super Snabb, GT and Slightly Firmer. While the wind had eased off a little, it was still strong enough to ensure that Race 8 was sailed at a fast pace. Deffcon 1 took the lead early and at the finish was over a minute clear of Wings in second place. Super Snabb managed to get ahead of Wings when rounding mark 1 for the third time, but was overtaken on the final downwind leg. Relience ffeighteen made up ground in the second half of the race and crossed in fourth place ahead of GT. Slightly Firmer was forced to retire early in the race following a mainsheet breakage.

The top three places in the Championship therefore went to Deffcon 1 (7), Wings (14), and Super Snabb (28).

DEFFCON 1



WINGS



Presentation of trophies and prizes following the completion of the Championship was carried out by CYC Commodore Howard Faulks and FFI-ACT President Matt Gleeson. In addition to thanking all the participants, Matt made special mention of the volunteers who had helped ensure a very well-run and successful Championship.

#### Trophy Presentation

Andrew Reed, Matt Gleeson, Howard Faulks and Matt Owen



NOTE: More photographs of the ACT Flying Fifteen Championship can be found on the Canberra Yacht Club's facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Canberra-Yacht-Club/190150934389679?ref=ts&fref=ts>

