

## VICTORIAN TEAM PERFORMS AT MINNOW NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS 2010

Lake Cootharaba Sailing Club hosted a very well organised Minnow National Championships 2010 which actually took place from 27<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> December 2009. This was a difficult time for many Minnow families due to Christmas, and commitment to other family members attending regatta's elsewhere.

Conditions in Queensland were affected by cyclonic activity in the north-west of the country resulting in rain and pleasantly cooler weather than anticipated. Each day presented a delightful and fairly constant breeze ranging from 8-20 knots, something for everyone to enjoy!

13 Victorians participated, and were very fortunate to receive expert coaching from Minnow Class Coach Sarah Blanck.

Jackson Day sailing "Cowbills", the lone (and very brave) Victorian Novice, sailed in a fleet of 8, and put on a sterling performance as the youngest and lightest competitor in his first Nationals regatta, finishing 5<sup>th</sup>.

The main fleet comprised 23 competitors including boats from host state Queensland, Northern Territory and Victoria.

The invitation race was held on the afternoon of the 27<sup>th</sup> of December in a moderate breeze over a very long, full Olympic course. It proved a good warm up for sailors with the 10 to 15 knot breeze, and they all slept well afterwards! The Brian McCarthy Trophy was awarded to Jack Graves in "Ozone" for taking out line honours.

The Nationals started the following day with 2 afternoon races. Charlotte Llewelyn in "Living Doll" started the series with a sensational Race 1 showing great speed and skill, but was ultimately pipped by Jack Graves, with seconds between the two of them and Sam Hannah in "Swift".

The 3<sup>rd</sup> heat was held the following morning with 2 heats after lunch, the course now shared by the Mirror Nationals Fleet which added a certain element of excitement at mark roundings! Sam Hannah sailed very consistently throughout, with great skill and style, never far off the lead, and became the Australian Junior Minnow Champion. Bella Dixon in "Ultra" was amongst the most improved with a personal best performance.

Hugo Llewelyn sailing "Sunset" showed he is a force to be reckoned with a 5<sup>th</sup> in heat 5, and sailed superbly throughout the regatta. He was the major player in the pre-start routine and managed to win practically every start in front of the fleet. Sarah Boyce in "Blue Eye II" showed huge stamina, sportsmanship and courage to start each race despite a debilitating back injury incurred just prior to the regatta.

Will Knight in "Wilso.." showed significant improvement and he is a definite challenger to the top of the fleet in the future. Charlie Dixon sailing "Smartiepants" showed strength and resilience in the afternoon seabreeze considering his light weight and put in a very pleasing and consistent performance.

Hamish Fleetwood in "Reckless", Jack Lewis in "Wet and Wild" and Oscar Philip sailing "Need for Speed" demonstrated some amazing recoveries from the dreaded "choc top" (mast top stuck in the mud in the heavier breezes) with Jack taking out the coveted "choc top" award, much revered at Lake Cootharaba! All three showed noticeable improvement in boat handling, ability and results as the regatta progressed.

Special mention must also go to Harry Jacob who had just stepped into his Minnow "Willow" for this Regatta from crewing on his International Cadet, and sailed an excellent regatta. Harry is a distant relative of Rex Fettell, who designed the Minnow back in 1970, which added a very nice sense of historical providence to the regatta!

The Victorians continued to show consistent results with 6 finishing in the top 10 overall including: Jack Graves 1<sup>st</sup>, with a fine performance winning every race, Sam Hannah 2<sup>nd</sup>, Charlotte Llewelyn 5<sup>th</sup>, Bella Dixon 6<sup>th</sup>, Harry Jacobs 7<sup>th</sup> and William Knight 8<sup>th</sup>.

Sarah Blanck was most impressed with the goal setting, skill and strategy development of each member of the Victorian team. She said " the improvements I saw over the course of the 4 days from every sailor was remarkable".

Results can be viewed at <http://results.lcsc.org.au/minnows/SGrp27.htm>

Thanks to Yachting Victoria and the Minnow Sailing Association for making a strong Victorian presence possible at these Nationals. Many thanks also to Lake Cootharaba organiser Linda Stemp, Green Fleet guru Charlie Hacker, Don Mallet for solving our container dilemma's, Commodore and Race Officer Stacey Brown and the untiring volunteers for all their assistance and making this such a successful and enjoyable regatta for Minnow sailors and families.