

2015 Sunburst Nationals at Muritai

The 2015 Harcourts sponsored Sunburst Nationals were held at the Muritai Yacht Club, Eastbourne, over Waitangi weekend – February 6-8.

There were 32 starters in the main fleet and 6 Sea Scout boats in their non spinnaker equipped fleet.

On the first day of racing a big Southerly was forecast to hit. At the briefing at 9.30am on Friday, the racing was called off for the day, which was a sensible call, as the wind was steadily increasing at that stage, and by lunchtime it was 30+ knots. The 2014 champ Andrew Brown ran a tuning and boat setup session on the ramp soon after the races had been called off. He explained what he did to set "Vagrant" up and the reasons why. This was attended by about 50 people and was very well received. Andrew has been doing these sessions during winter with the Wakatere fleet over the last 2 seasons and it is great to see that he has always been willing to share knowledge, now amongst a wider audience than just at his home club.

The call was made to start racing on the Saturday at 9.00am and to do 5 races that day. The sailors arrived bright and early and they were greeted with a lovely 18 knot southerly, but that slowly died away during the morning's racing.

The first 3 races were won by Andrew & Cameron Brown with the top all female team of Polly Wright & Penny Linton also having a good start to the regatta with a 2nd, 4th and a 6th. Jane Calvert sailing with her son Ben Stirling, also had a consistent morning along with Nick & Flinn Olson and Scott & Jack Beavis. Surprise entrants, and eventual winners of the "Husband & wife " category- Matthew Stevens & Sophie James sailed some great races in the dying breeze with a 2nd and a 3rd in Race 2 and race 3.

The fleet was sent in for a well deserved lunch while waiting for the wind, which by now had turned 180 degrees, to build from the North.

Once back on the water the fleet was greeted to a shifty 16 knot northerly breeze, that built to 25 knots by the end of the second race of the afternoon. Scott & Jack Beavis won the first afternoon race followed closely by Nick & Flinn Olson with Cameron & Andrew Brown in 3rd place and Matthew & Sophie in 4th.

In the second race of the afternoon, Matthew & Sophie found a clean pair of heels upwind to win that race and to sit them in 2nd equal overall at the end of the day tied with Nick & Flinn Olson. In this last race Nick & Flinn capsized in the breezy conditions, but still managed to finish the race in 4th place.

On the Sunday racing was due to start at 9.00am and with a weather forecast that suggested strengthening wind, the race committee knew they would only squeeze in 1 or maybe 2 races.

The race started promptly at 9.00am with 23 knots from the north which produced large waves to hinder getting off the beach. It built to 25-26 knots by the end of the race and this strong wind produced some great waves to surf downwind on. The top three boats broke away from the rest of the fleet and a ding dong battle ensued between them. On the final downwind leg, Andrew & Cameron Brown surged through for their 4th race win in the regatta, Nick Olson came second and Matthew Steven third. Phillip Governale & Andrew Patterson improved significantly from their early races in the regatta to get a great 4th placing in this last race. This was the only race run on the Sunday so in the end there were 6 races completed with 5 to count.

Ken Burt and his Muritai Race Committee team did an awesome job in getting 6 races completed out of the 8 races scheduled during the 2 days that were sailed. Most of these were run in very trying conditions for both the competitors and the Race Officials. Two crews from Otago and one from Canterbury made the effort to trail their boats up from the South Island. Class Chairman Roy Roker congratulated the Muritai club on running a superb regatta. The organising committee did an excellent job onshore and everyone was made to feel welcome, and nothing was too difficult to sort out.

Thank you to sponsors Harcourts Eastbourne, Seaview Sails & Rigging, Pak N Save Petone, Linton Sails, Burnsco Marine, Resene Paints, and Pro Emb Co.

Next year the 2016 Sunburst Nationals are scheduled to be held in Canterbury.

The top 5 placings were : (6 races sailed, 1 discard)

1 st : Andrew & Cameron Brown,	- Wakatere - 6 points,
2 nd : Mathew Steven & Sophie James	- Worser Bay -13 points,
3 rd :Nick & Flinn Olson	- Wakatere - 14 points,
4 th : Scott & Jack Beavis	- Wakatere -18 points,
5 th : Polly Wright & Penny Linton	- Worser Bay - 22 points.

The Sea Scouts section (all non spinnaker) was won by Andre & Marcus Van Dam from the Paremata Sea Scouts.

As is usual in the Sunburst Class there are Trophies and categories for many things :

Wilson & Horton Cup –(1st Overall) – Andrew & Cameron Brown (Wakatere)

Brooke Trophy – (2nd Overall) - Mathew Steven & Sophie James (Worser Bay)

Wakatere Trophy for 1st on Handicap : - Mark & Jenny Ryan (Muritai YC)

Kettlewell Cup – Under 19 Youth trophy – Polly Wright & Penny Linton (Worser Bay)

Secondary School Trophy – Polly Wright & Penny Linton
(Wellington East Girl's College)

Muritai One Ton Cup – (1st with a combined age of more than 100 years)

- Alastair Campbell & George Willcock (Worser Bay)

Bouzaid Cup - Jane Hawkins

Master (helm > 40yrs) - Jane Calvert (Worser Bay)

Grand Master (helm > 50 yrs) - Alastair Campbell (Worser Bay)

Veteran (helm >60 years) - Wal Louden (Muritai)

1st Parent & Child Crew - Andrew & Cameron Brown (Wakatere)

1st Husband & Wife (or equivalent) – Mathew Steven & Sophie James (Worser Bay)

1st all female Crew - Polly Wright & Penny Linton (Worser Bay)

Wakatere Boating Club won the top club prize.

There were 3 new categories added this year :

Lightweights (combined crew weight < 110kgs) : Andrew & Cameron Brown

Middleweights (combined crew weight 110-140kgs) : Nick & Flinn Olson

Heavyweights (combined crew weight >140 kgs) : Mathew Steven & Sophie James

These 3 crews came respectively 1st, 3rd and 2nd overall on Line.

In summary, Andrew & Cameron Brown did a great job defending their title winning 4 out of the 6 races sailed, counting a 2nd place and discarding a 3rd place.

Mathew Steven & Sophie James had one race win and came 2nd overall, just heading off Nick & Flinn Olson, who were a few points clear of Scott & Jack Beavis, the winners of race 4.

There is still a 71 year Age Range of Competitors at the Sunburst Nationals!

Last year, after the 2014 Sunburst Nationals held at Wakatere, we wrote a story on the 71 year age range of the competitors.

We included a photo of the 3 youngest and the 2 oldest competitors in the regatta, which we have repeated here, and we can report the same 5 turned for the 2015 Nationals held at Muritai Yacht Club – The age range is the same, it is just that everyone is another year older.



Colin Dalziel, on the left of the photo is now 78. He is crew for well-known Muritai helmsman Wal Louden, and this year they have a collective age of 150 years. They came 11th overall in this regatta that had 32 starters in the main fleet. Wal won the Veteran category for helmsman (1st skipper over 60 years of age).

Jack Beavis, 2nd on left is now 7 years old, and came 4th overall, crewing for his father Scott.

Cam Brown, 3rd from left is now 8 years old, crewed for his father Andrew and they won 4 races out of the 6 races, and the regatta overall.

Flinn Olson, 4th from left has now just turned 7. He crewed for his father Nick, and they came 3rd overall.

Maurice Scott, 5th from left, now 76, has sailed at 20 out of the 22 Sunburst Nationals held so far. He came 24th in the 32 boat fleet.

The Sunburst Class has always had a diverse range of ages and crew weights sailing. This year 3 new prize categories were introduced :

Lightweights : 1st crew with a combined weight of less than 110kgs.

Middleweights : 1st crew with a combined weight of 110-140 kgs.

Heavyweights : 1st crew with a combined weight of more than 140kgs.

(140kgs is the combined weight of two normal sized adults, and there are many crew combinations of this weight sailing in the fleets throughout the country.)

Some of the class wags were suggesting beforehand that most of the 1st to 10th placings would be filled by lightweights, most of the 11th to 20th placings by middleweights, and most of the 21st to 30's placings by heavyweights, but this was not the case. Whilst the regatta winners, Andrew & Cam Brown are in the lightweight category, second place getters – Mathew Stevens & Sophie James are in the heavy weight category, and third place getters, Nick & Flinn Olson are in the middleweight category.

Written by Nigel Price, Andrew Brown & Roy Roker