

The Wind Favours the Big Cats

Story by Tim Symons, Photos by John Byrne and John Russell

Despite the dark and foreboding sky the hardy sailors of Lake Jindabyne Sailing Club gathered at the lakeside to compete in heat eleven of the 2019/20 Twilight series on Wednesday 12th February. Eighteen boats competed in two divisions. John Byrne manned the start boat while Nic Kennedy and John Russell manned the start boat. The start was delayed while John returned to the beach to re-attach the start boat's missing anchor.

The nine boat cat fleet started first into the 5 to 7 knot Southerly breeze from the start line at the Bay mark. The cats rounded the Quarry mark and set off on a long reach to the recently repositioned Mountain mark. The fleet was bunched together with Michael Fearnide & Ross Tattersall on Wild Cat rounding the mark first. The fleet then spread out on the reach back to the Bay mark with the two man cats slipping ahead of the smaller one man cats.

The nine mono-hull fleet started next and set off on their first triangle lap around the Peninsular mark. John Baird sailed his Laser with the bigger two man boats of Terry Lee & Lucas Blackmore-Lee and Phil Daley & Nick Kirshner. The breeze shifted round on the course and increased in strength to about 12 knots on the main lake past Lion Island.

The cats spread out round the course with the bigger cats way in front of the others. They completed a full five lap course with the big cats finishing just as the breeze dropped off to less than 5 knots for the remaining cats to complete their last lap at an ever decreasing speed. Michael & Ross held the lead for a while as they battled with Alex Machin & Barry Dennis on the Hobie 20 and Jason Abbott & Sam Bishop on their Capricorn F18. Michael & Ross unluckily snagged the anchor rope on the Quarry mark while rounding it for the last time which lost them the lead and caused them to complete a 360 degree penalty turn.

John set a finish line at the Bay mark and signalled a shortened course to the monohull fleet. After a four lap course, the mono-hulls were led to the finish by John, nearly four minutes in front of Terry and Lucas. They were followed by Phil & Nick, Steve Osborne, Rod Baillie, Mal McLean, Kerry McGaw, Suzie Green and Ross Lawley. John took a well-earned win on handicap corrected times followed by Steve, Suzie, Kerry, Terry & Lucas, Rod, Mal, Phil & Nick, and Ross.

Thomas Davis sailed his dad's Hobie 17, but discovered that he had failed to insert one of the boat's bungs and had to retire from the race. Thor & Freya Slater retired after slipping way behind the fleet in the dying breeze on the last triangle lap. After a well sailed race using all of the wind shifts to advantage, Alex & Barry led the fleet to the finish line followed by Jason & Sam, Michael & Ross, Adam Robinson & Hughie, Alistair Cross & Gavin Fuller, Tim Symons and Andrew Kennedy. Alex & Barry took their second handicap win in a row. The rest of the fleet remained in their finishing positions after applying their handicaps.

The rain stopped long enough on Saturday 15th February for Lake Jindabyne Sailing Club to run heat ten of the 2019/20 Point-score series. Eight monohulls and four catamarans rigged up to compete in a short race run by John Byrne who was assisted by Thomas Davis in the rescue boat.

The fleet headed off the beach to the start line at the Peninsular mark in a light to medium strength bigger cats battled the very light and shifty breeze to reach the Cardinal mark while Thor & Freya Slater followed on their Maricat. They all then headed to the Mountain mark where they were met by Thomas who told them of a change in the course due to the light breeze and they headed for the new finish line at the Club mark near the clubhouse.

The two big cats of Michael Fearnside & Ross Tattersall and Alistair & Lucy Cross battled each other and the tricky breeze all the way to the Finish line. Michael & Ross finished first only 21 seconds in front of Alistair & Lucy. Tim slowly finished next in the next to nothing circling breeze with Thor & Freya suffering even less breeze as they completed the cat fleet. Alistair & Lucy won the race on yardstick corrected times followed by Michael & Ross, Tim and Thor & Freya.

The mono-hulls also sailed a slow and frustrating race on the same course. Ross Lawley, Phil Daley & Harriet Greville and Terry Lee & Lucas Blackmore-Lee all retired from the race. The five remaining Lasers completed the course and finished within a 50 second span. Mal McLean finished first followed by Hamish Greenwood, Sam Bylett and Kerry McGaw 1 second apart from each other. Adam Robinson completed the fleet. Sam took the adjusted time win from Kerry, Adam, Mal & Hamish.