



Interschool Sailing Championships at Freshwater Bay 2016

Report by Geoff McGillivray, Director of Sailing

Considering my Scottish heritage, it would be no surprise that I love the sound of the bagpipes! The one exception is when the tune begins to echo across the waters of Freshwater Bay, when the final of the Western Australian Schools Teams racing Championships is still to be decided.

So it was, after three hard days of teams racing, that Christ Church A team found themselves in a pretty difficult predicament – two races down in a best of five final series against Scotch College 1. Could they come back from there?

The preceding days had seen a pretty solid performance by each of the three Christ Church teams. Whilst Christ Church B and C teams did not make it to the final day of competition, there was a lot to like about their performance in the Swiss League round robin section of the opening days. In the light-moderate shifty conditions of the waters off the shores of Point Walter Reserve, it was Christ Church C that stole the limelight on the first day, having wins against the likes of Mandurah Catholic College, Esperance 1 and Perth Modern 1. With skippers James Blaxill, Alex Bootsma and Archie Reichstein well in tune with each other, and their respective crews, the boys showed glimpses of talent that had the other teams thinking that they were not to be labelled easy-beats. In fact, their only loss came at the expense of their compatriots Christ Church A.

Christ Church B also fared pretty well on the opening day, securing solid wins against Hale, Wesley and St Marks. Unfortunately they went down to serious contenders, Shenton College and Scotch 2. Christ Church A suffered a similar fate, scoring comfortable wins against the C team, St Marks and MLC, but succumbing to their nemesis of 2015, Scotch College 1 and 2.

Day two brought very light winds, with only two races being sailed before the postponement flag went up. Unfortunately, Christ Church C competed in one of those races, going down to Shenton College. All teams were sent back to shore where they stayed for the next 3 hours.

Racing eventually got underway, with a healthy south westerly beginning to exert some influence over a strong tidal current. Unfortunately however, things did not get better for Christ Church C, who as a result of their strong performance the previous day, came up against some strong opposition in Wesley and John XXIII, failing to improve on their score. Christ Church B, despite the superb efforts of skippers Alex Shearer, Jamie Bougher and Aidan Lee, and their respective crews, could not make any impression against the powerful teams of Shenton College, Scotch College 1 and our own Christ Church A.

Christ Church A, ably led by experienced skippers Aaron Wright, Tom Giudice and Liam Forrester seemed to get a better draw, scoring easy wins against Hale and Wesley. However, in the last race of the day, perennial opponent Scotch College 2, riding a wave of confidence, proved to be a stumbling block.

At the end of the day, with results tallied, Christ Church A, with 5 wins and 3 losses sat in 4th place, secure in the knowledge they had made their way through to the third day of racing, which would feature the top eight only. Christ Church B, with 4 wins and 4 losses failed to make it through, finishing in 10th place, while Christ Church C completed their racing in 12th place with 3 wins and 5 losses.

The 3rd and final day of racing dawned with a consistent fresh south easterly breeze coming in at 10 – 12 knots.... perfect for teams racing! An excited crowd, including new Principal Alan Jones and Director of Planning and Co-curricular Mark Morrissy, were on hand to see Christ Church A open the account for the day with a solid win over Scotch 2. This was followed by successive wins over Frederick Irwin, Esperance 1 and John XXIII. One more win would most certainly guarantee a place in the finals, but it was not to be against Scotch 1. As in all other meetings in this regatta, the boys from across the way proved to be superior. An unexpected loss to Shenton College, followed by a

comfortable win against Hale, left the team with a 5 – 2 scorecard, good enough to secure equal second place in the round robin of the final eight teams. As expected, Scotch 1 chose Shenton for the semi final, whilst Christ Church A and Scotch 2 would battle it out in the other semi.

After an hour break for lunch, and in a fading south easterly, the semi finals got underway. Scotch College 1 immediately asserted their dominance over Shenton, whilst Christ Church A took the honours in a best of three semi final against Scotch 2. In a display of team confidence, and some superb sailing by the Liam Forrester/Ben Duffy combination, the team backed it up with another win to ensure that 2016 would not be an all Scotch final, as it had been last year.

The first of the finals, in a best of five series, went all the way of Scotch 1. They were quick off the line, and rounded the first mark in a winning 1,2 combination. Whilst the Christ Church crews battled manfully with the 3rd Scotch boat, they were never in a position to threaten. 1 – 0 to Scotch. Scotch 2 also posted a win in the first of the petite finals against Shenton.

The second race got underway with a disastrous start by the Christ Church team, incurring two penalties. Fortunately, the Forrester factor came in to play again, to get the team back in the hunt. With a flukey south easterly playing havoc with strategies and tactics, the Christ Church team worked their way into a competitive position, only to be thwarted at the last attempt right on the finish line. 2 – 0 to Scotch. When Shenton got one back over Scotch 2, it was game on for 3rd place.

It was at this point, when the battle was right on, that the piper struck up an opening note.

“ It’s not over yet Scotch” came the cry from a raft of Christ Church and Shenton supporters. But unfortunately, it did mark the beginning of the end! In the final race of the day, and one in which the lead changed numerous times, Christ Church A finally went down to a triumphant Scotch 1. Scotch 2 also rallied to steal 3rd place from Shenton.

All in all, a fantastic regatta, with a fitting outcome. Scotch College 1 first and deservedly so... unbeaten all regatta. Christ Church A second and definitely on the improve and the ever consistent Shenton, 3rd again.

A big thankyou to all the sailors in the teams racing squad, and especially the 21 who represented Christ Church in the event. A big thankyou to the coaches Sam Gilmour, Lachy Gilmour and Luc Tasker. Well done guys! And a big thankyou to the parents, friends and family who came to Point Walter to support the boys in their endeavours.

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