



This tour started in the very early hours of Tuesday 12 July with all nine members of the Christ Church Sailing Team making their way to the airport by 5.30 in the morning. Our flight to Adelaide was relatively uneventful, apart from a fairly rugged buffeting on approach to landing, from the ice cold 50 knot winds that were wreaking havoc on Adelaide.

On switching the mobile phone back to life, we were greeted with a text from the regatta organising authority that all scheduled trainings had been cancelled due to the strong winds. With the urgency now gone, we were able to adopt a more leisurely pace to make the 100 kilometre drive, in the hired Hiace 12 seater minibus, from Adelaide to Goolwa via picturesque Victor Harbour. On arrival in Goolwa we picked up the key to our holiday home from the local real estate agency. 'Holiday Perfection' was exactly that, a very neat holiday house that had all the creature comforts of home, and had been set up especially to sleep nine people in their own bed. After some quick decision making as to who would sleep where, we unpacked the minibus and headed off to the scene of all the action, the Goolwa Aquatic Club, a mere five minutes drive away.

After confirming our registration, coach Brendon Wright guided the seven sailors through their weigh in procedure, while Team Manager Geoff McGillivray took the opportunity to head to the local supermarket to stock up on supplies for breakfast, race day snacks and the evening treats. Later that evening, we, along with 23 other teams assembled at the nearby Goolwa Regatta Yacht Club, co-host of the event, for a welcome dinner and pre-regatta briefing. This event provided everyone with an opportunity to catch up with sailing rivals from both Perth (Shenton College and John XXIII College) and interstate. After the obligatory introductions and welcome speeches, it was back home for an early night's sleep.

Race day one loomed cold, wet and windy. The team was not overly bothered by the conditions, as all of the holiday training sessions of the previous week had been exactly that – cold, wet and windy. Accordingly, team Christ Church got off to a shaky start with a win over one of the lesser Tasmanian teams, Fahan School, but not before a number of red flag penalties from basic errors. The rest of the morning session proceeded in a similar vain with all crews finding it difficult to sail clean, resulting in comprehensive losses to St Leonards (NSW) and Friends B (Tasmania). The team found a bit of form in their fourth race of the day, taking out St Josephs (SA) all girl team quite comfortably, only to go down to arch rival from the west, Shenton College, in another error riddled performance. The lunch break gave the team the opportunity to re-group, assess the situation and adopt a different starting strategy. It paid dividends immediately and the team rattled off four consecutive wins against Iona (NSW), Fahan (Tas), John XXIII College (WA) and St Peter's (SA). With their confidence growing steadily, the team took to the water for their final race of the day against long time rivals St Josephs (Port Lincoln, SA) only to have the race committee call it quits for the day. With a 6:3 win loss ratio Christ Church sat in sixth place on the overall leader board.

Race day two arrived with a more hospitable weather outlook – grey clouds interspersed with the occasional breaks of warm sunshine and the inevitable chilly south easterly winds. The team kicked off the day with an impressive win over St Josephs (SA) A team, and then followed that up with an equally impressive win over Hutchins Gold (Tas). The team continued to roll on with a well controlled win over the lesser of the two Friends teams from Tasmania, making an impressive climb up the Swiss League ladder. But the good form all came to a grinding halt when our nemesis of the past two State Championships, Shenton College, completely psyched us out, inflicting the first loss of the day. We struck back in the next race with a closely fought win of the current South Australian State Champions, Westminster, but the pattern of inconsistency re-emerged with a loss to the St Virgils College combination from Tasmania. A

great win over the league table leaders, Scots College (NSW) gave the team an indication that when they sail to their best, they are as good as anyone in the competition. The last two races of the day were against the teams from Friends, two very competitive teams from a school with a wealth of depth in their sailing. The numbers fell our way in the first of the two races, securing another solid win over the 'lesser' Friends W team, whom we had beaten earlier in the day. Unfortunately, we succumbed to the 'better' Friends B team, incurring a significant loss to finish the day with a 6:4 win/loss ratio. All in all, a pretty good days sailing that saw us climb the ladder to equal second position with 12 wins out of 19 races.

Race day three saw no wind and was not looking good. A whisper of breeze had the race committee excited enough to send the boats on the water, at least to sail them from their rigging location at Goolwa Regatta Yacht Club, half a kilometre down the river to the race venue at Goolwa Aquatic Club. On arrival the boats were beached and held on shore for an hour until the breeze kicked in to a more substantial five knots. Our first race of the day was against Scots 1, whom we had already beaten once before. After a shaky start the team clawed its way back in to a winning combination, only to lose the race on the final beat to the finish. Race two for the day was against Hutchins Gold, and it was more of the same. The very light flukey conditions were not to our liking and again we had to try and claw our way back from a poor start. Hutchins were too good, inflicting our second loss for the day. Race three saw us up against an unknown quantity in St Bedes' College (Vic). A great start enabled the team to slip around the first mark in a one, two, six combination, enabling good control of the race. Some smart sailing by the opposition saw them cross the finish line first, but it was not enough to beat our positions of two, three and five. A relief to get the win. With confidence back, we then took on cross town rivals John XXIII College, who were having a pretty good regatta. We put a serious dent in their plans however, with a very convincing one, two, three win. Our good fortune was not to continue however, as both St Josephs (SA) and Friends W (Tas) capitalised on some error ridden sailing to inflict us with two losses. Fortunately, we did manage to regain some pride with another convincing win over John XXIII College in our last race for the day. We finished the day with a fairly miserable 3:4 win loss ratio, that left us lying in seventh place overall, but on equal points with six other teams. A berth in the finals was not yet secure!

Race day four - Finals day! Dawn broke with no wind and ice all over the windscreen. It was very cold, but that did not deter the team from being at the boat park at the usual 8.00 o'clock. Things were slow to get going in the boat park, with all crews finding great amusement in scaping the ice from the decks of the yachts. It had indeed been a very cold night. Eventually the race committee gave the signal to hit the water, anxious to get the final day of racing underway. It was a decision that did not favour our team, who, coming from one of the windiest places in the world, do not find sailing in light winds comes naturally. And so when our first race of the day got underway in three knots, we struggled. Fortunately, the heavyweight crew of St Virgils College combination also struggled and we were able to lead them around the first mark in a winning one, two combination. However, the very soft breeze and a bit of bad luck saw that lead evaporate on the final beat to the finish line, with us eventually going down in a close loss. Things were getting tight as we slipped into eighth place overall, on equal points with six other teams. With time slipping away the race committee decided to hold one final round of races to complete the Swiss League table to decide the top eight teams who would compete in the finals. We drew Hutchins Maroon, the lesser of the two teams from the Principal, Mr Jones's former School. In a do or die effort to secure a spot in the finals, the team sailed brilliantly to secure placings of one, two, and six – a certain win.

So, after 28 races, we had finished with a win loss ratio of 16:14, not great, but good enough to secure a seventh place and into the finals. Now the real competition starts. As per the sailing instructions, we were matched against the second place team, Scots 1, in the second quarter final. Having beaten them before, we knew we were in with a chance in the best of three quarter final. In the light, flukey breeze the team sailed well to round the first mark in a winning one, four, five combination. Things got pretty tense in the next couple of legs, with the opponents working every possible tactic to convert to a winning combination. The Christ Church boys were equal to the task, and while first position slipped away, the final placings of two, three and five were good enough to secure the win. Scots were undoubtedly feeling the

pressure going into the second race, whilst the Christ Church confidence was sky high. And that's how it played out. Christ Church got off to a good start, rounding the first mark in a winning one, three, six combination. With some seriously good teams racing, the boys were able to convert that into an unbeatable one, two, six securing the quarter final and the opportunity to move into the semi finals. Scots, who had been up near the top for most of the regatta were relegated to seventh place overall.

After a brief respite while the other quarter finals played out, we were back on the water again, this time against Friends White in the second semi final. We had also beaten this team a couple of times in the preliminary rounds, so we were confident that we were in with a chance. In a dying breeze, things got off to a slow start and it did not look too good when the opposition rounded the first mark in one, two and four. It was a tough battle from there on, and the Christ Church team could not make any impression, eventually going down by the same margin. Race two of the best of three semi finals got off to a much better start, with the boys going round in a solid one, three, four combination. However, Friends struck back, gradually working their way through to two, three, four positions. It looked like our regatta was over!

But that was not to be! Some astute calculations by our coach, Brendon Wright, who subsequently lodged a request for redress, had the Jury questioning the determinations of the Race Committee. They had incorrectly matched the semi final pairings. So, it was back on the water again, this time against the team from Westminster - a team that we had beaten two days before in moderate winds. But unfortunately, the CCGS boys were no match for them in the light and variable conditions that prevailed and they went down two nil to the South Australian champions, who moved straight into the grand final.

It was not over yet though. As a result of their higher quarter final win, Christ Church got one last chance to make to make amends, contesting a preliminary final against the winner of the other semi – Friends White. The winner would go into the final against Westminster, the loser would take third place. Unfortunately, Friends were starting to hit their straps at the right time and it did not take them long to gain the advantage with a comfortable win in the first race. They followed that up with a similarly convincing win in the second race, knocking us out of the final, and leaving us with a third place overall.

In a show of brilliance in light weather sailing, Friends White stole the march on Westminster in the final best of five, winning three to one. Very worthy winners of the 2016 Australian Secondary Schools Team Sailing Championships. Westminster second and Christ Church third.