

2010 New Zealand Phase 2 National Championships

Ben Howson

The outstanding sailing waters of Kawau was the setting for the 2010 Phase 2 National Championships last weekend. Sandspit Yacht Club and Yachting New Zealand combined to ensure a smooth running and enjoyable event. Skippers and crew came from as far as Wellington to compete for the national title with contingents from Waikato and Auckland travelling to the northern most bastion of the class.

The south westerly breezes proved to be quite a challenge for some crews, and even experienced crews had occasional capsize as the wind got up to 20 knots. Familiarity with their boats and reading the changes in wind direction and strength began to highlight the boats to watch to take the title. With the wind coming either side of the Highfield Reserve bluff, the top teams made the most of the wind fluctuations near the top mark of the trapezoid course. The boats relished the constant wind and made the most of the sea state to produce some thrilling off wind legs for the crews.

Racing was tight at the top, with the first places being shared among four different boats. Iain Thain and Maddie Turnbull from the RNZYS and Pupuke Boating Club were sailing in this class together for the first time and picked the shifts well to put them in first place after the first four races. Current Auckland champions Johnny and Geoff Bates sailed with great determination and vigour and to beat Sandspit Yacht Club members, Ben Howson and Shannen Mills on two nail biting occasions. By consistently earning top places including three firsts, last years second place brother and sister team Micah and Alex Wilkinson, ended up taking home the youth and overall titles showing excellent speed on the reaching and downwind legs.

Other Rodney sailors were Chris Cadas and Darren Peterson from Manly Sailing Club, Alan Raney teamed up with Savannah Gordon represented Sandspit Yacht Club with fellow member Nicola Paterson crewing for class president Mark Tucker.

One of the special characteristics of the class is the varied ages of competitors and the number of family teams at this and previous regattas. The boats themselves are very even, with no discernable differences in performance between 30 year old boats and more recent ones. Kaukapakapa boat builder, Peter Johnson, ensures they are built within strict tolerances and with only one class sail maker, the emphasis is on sailing rather than investing the most money into the boat. More information about the class can be found at www.phase2.org.nz

Overall Results

1st Micah Wilkinson, Alex Wilkinson, Ngaroto Boating Club

2nd Johnny Bates, Geoff Bates, Tamaki Yacht Club

3rd Ben Howson, Shannen Mills, Sandspit Yacht Club