

## INTERNATIONAL 5.5 METRE CLASS IN AUSTRALIA

### INVITATIONAL REGATTA HOSTED BY THE VAUCLUSE YACHT CLUB

Over a couple of drinks during the Christmas break some members of the Vaucluse Yacht Club decided it would be a good thing to hold an impromptu regatta for the 5.5's. A notice of race was prepared and despite the short notice six boats faced the starter on the 11<sup>th</sup> January. The numbers although small, was pleasing, there being no lack of competitive spirit. The racing on the first day was held in 15 – 18 Knot breezes. The first two races in southerly winds and the breeze moved to the south east for the third race of the day.

In race 1 Rhapsody and Antares renewed old rivalries with absolutely nothing between them. The lead changed several times with Antares gaining a win over Rhapsody by 16 seconds with a well timed jibe on the final run. Pam was very well sailed and finished a close third. Baragoola and Jabiru were not far away and finished in that order. Yeoman IV was a credible sixth.

In race 2 Rhapsody and Antares were at it again. Antares rounded the bottom mark for the final time a mere six seconds in front. However approaching the top mark Rhapsody picked a shift from the left hand side of the course and held that lead on the run to the finish to win by 55 seconds from Antares. Pam being never far away was third. Baragoola and Jabiru were having their own private race with Dave De Coster on Baragoola electing the left hand side in search of the shift managed to break away from Jabiru on the last work.

For the third race, Rhapsody did not compete as Colin was under a time constraint to have Marc on a 6.00 PM flight back to Oslo. That was no mean feat as it was touch and go for them to make the spit bridge opening to get back home in time. Antares sailed well and finished first. Pam Baragoola and Jabiru were never far apart around the course. Pam picked a shift up the last beat and finished a credible second. Jabiru managed a hard fought third by a mere 12 seconds from Baragoola. Yeoman IV was never far away and finished sixth.

The fourth and final race was held on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> January. The wind was straight out of the southeast and was blowing a cold 25 to 30 knots. Baragoola and Yeoman IV sailed to the start and wisely decided not to compete and went home. David was mumbling something about his new carbon jib. At the proposed starting time only Antares and Rhapsody were at the course area. They both decided to have one race for the day. The preparatory signals were fired and Pam appeared from nowhere with 2 ½ minutes to go. Jabiru also appeared a little late sporting a makeshift repair to a torn mainsail. A great effort for the conditions. It was a wonderful site to see Rhapsody, Pam and Antares thundering up the first beat very close together. Nearing the top mark Rhapsody finished on the wrong side a ferry wave and took a substantial amount of green water over the bow. In the conditions Rhapsody took the prudent option and ran downwind to assist with bailing. Jabiru rounded the top mark and then headed for home with the gooseneck track coming loose from the mast. That left Antares and Pam to battle out the day. Both boats were well sailed in the conditions, particularly down wind with spinnakers. Antares had a hard earned victory from Pam.

The remaining races for the series were abandoned.

All boats managed to return to their moorings safely. The presentation and BBQ was held with the absence of many of the sailors however a request has been made to hold another regatta later this season. It is anticipated a little notice should encourage more boats to the starting line.