**Club Captain’s Report**

**Season 2023 – 2024**

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| Season at a glance: |
| Club racing: 95 total entries, 24 days (excluding twilight events) |
| Cat Regatta: 38 Entries, 2 days. |
| Sabre National Championships: 67 entries, 5 days. |
| Lighthouse Reggata: 69 entries incl. 16 visitors, 2 days |
| Sharpie Victorian State Championship: 8 entries, 2 days |

Season 23-24 has provided a range of opportunities for club members to participate in sailing in a varity of ways. The conventional club program of Saturday sailing ran from the first weekend in October through to the last weekend in April. The only weekends when events were not planned were the March Labor Day weekend and Easter. These weekends are typically filled with sailing opprtunities at class and club regattas. Out of our control was the some challenging weather with alternating heavy and light winds in spring and a very calm autumn.

Saturday racing included the main course and a “green fleet” course for the less experienced. Four regatta’s were run with varying degrees of success. The Mud Island Cruise in January was well received by participants, despite the weather, and it is a type of event I hope can continue to evolve to meet our desire for some more “cruisy” sailing. The McCrae open match racing was also well received again. Twilight sailing was programmed for a larger number of days last season but participations rates were low and very weather dependent. Outside the formal events there has been devloping group members using the club for casual sailing and training on Saturdays and Sundays, particularly the the sailboard community.

**Participation**

Overall entries in club racing this year were similar to last season with 95 indiviual enrtries in the Aggregate and the various minor series throughout the year. The average participation rate on each day of sailing was down a little compared to previous years. The program was intended to provide a mix of sailing opportunities to cater for regular club racing with opprtunities to run some regattas that support class racing and provide income for the club. Very few members manaaged to sail more then half the Agregate series which, as is traditional, was held over almost the entire season from mid November to April. This format will be reconsidered for next season.

Once again numbers for regattas were down slightly. Entry numbers are influenced significantly by weather forcasts. People are more and more relunctant to travel to events when the forecast is poor. This is also reflected in the reluctance to enter regatta’s in advance. “Late entry” fees or cheaper “early bird” entries have little influence in this regard. I feel that significant investment in event promotion will be required to arrest the general trend.

**Major Events**

The Victorian Catamaran Championships were run in November 2023. A small field of just 38 entries was presented with difficult conditions. Unfortunatley there was no sailing possible on the Saturday. Four races were run on the Sunday in windy, rainy conditions.

The Sabre National Championships were hosted in December-January. The Sabre class events are always well attended and 67 boats were hosted. 7 heats pluss the invitaion race were completed for a successful regatta

Lighthouse regatta. The loss of the sponsorship and promotinal skills of Ronstan presented a new challenge that we were unprepared for. Costs for the regatta increased significantly and the lack of sufficient pre-event entries made the financial risk too great to continue with the regatta in its original format. The event was re-formated into two days of sailing taking in Austalia Day (Friday) and the Saturday. 69 participants was a good number with a much reduced cost and volunteer work load. This format will be retained for next season and untill participation rates can be increased to justify a bigger event. The Ronstan regatta had seen participation falling since the peak of 2021 when it was the almost first sailing event after Covid restrictions eaased.

**Boats & Equipment**

There have not been any major expenses or unexpected maintenance on boats and equipment this season. Tractor repairs proved to be less difficult than first thought and cost less than budgeted. The tractor is coming to the end of it’s useful life at McCrae given the toll of salt and the type of use. It will be a task for the coming season to develop a strategy for replacement of this essential asset.

Our current fleet of power boats and equipment fills our needs and provides the flexibility needed to run larger events when the time comes. The trailer renewal program carried out in recent years has put us in a good position. We have not utillised Freedon or Pogy as much this year, partly out of difficulties filling all boat positions every week, and partly for reduced fleets at times not justifying the extra equipment on water.

Cameron Dunwoody has again done a fantastic job in terms of effort and results managing equipment maintenence. Cameron has also been on a rescue boat all season and is active in training of our boat crews.

**Volunteers**

I do thank all members of the sailing committee for their time, effort and support running the season’s events. I also thank Scott Watson and Browyn Evans in particular for the active support and assitance this year.

The boat crews, tractor drivers, tower crew and Alona Riley are essential in keeping the sailing happeneing. I cannot thank them enough for their effort, skill, care and enthusiasm for the club.

Thanks also goes to those who have assisted on a rostered basis and pitched in a the v arious special events.

**Plans for the 2024-2025 season**

For next season the program will be similar to last year but with some reformatting of events to encorage participation. We will look to create more flexibity in some areas such as only programming twiglight events when the weather forecast is promising.

Regattas for next season are the Victorian Cataman Championships (Nov), Hobie National Championships (Dec-Jan), Lighthouse Regatta (Australia Day Weekend), with an option to run a state championship regatta in late March.

**Steven Floyd**

Club Captain.

9/06/2024