

13th Skate Nationals Chelsea 1969-70 Series Report - Seacraft February 1970

Skates

VICTORIANS IMPROVE

Although NSW's "Peta" won the title, Port Phillip skippers pressed close, taking places.

BIG surprise of the Skate national titles held at Chelsea YC on Port Phillip Bay was the excellent performance of the Victorians. Their boats took second,



Peta, low-flying NSW Skate sailed by R. Lowndes and L. Donovan.

third and fourth position in the titles, revealing considerably improved sailing since last season when their best was 13th.

Twenty-eight boats competed from three States. WA boats which had taken three of the first five places last year were sadly lacking. However, B. Howells from WA who finished ninth last year decided to represent his State while holidaying in Victoria and was rewarded by a win in the handicap section.

In heat 1, *Peta*, R. Lowndes, NSW, took the lead at the start and held his position as they completed the first triangle. He was followed by *Wagner* (S. Frosh, Vic), *Zephyr* (C. Eddy, NSW) and *Taubada* (I. Hughes,

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Vic). No changes in position occurred until the start of the last lap when *Wogmar* dropped back to seventh. *Peta* was first across the line with *Zephyr* and *Taubada* filling the minor placings.

Heat 2 was quite a contest. *Taubada* held the early lead from *Zeus* (K. O'Halloran, Vic) and *Peta*. *Peta*, sailing magnificently, snatched the lead as they rounded for the third time, while *Fury S* (J. Manfield, Vic) moved into second ahead of *Zeus*. *Taubada*, which had dropped back to eighth, surprised the leaders by sailing through five boats to take third on the line behind *Peta* and *Fury S*.

Heat 3 saw the fortunes of many skippers fluctuate yet again. Early leader was *Taubada* followed by *Bacardi* (P. Peelgrane, NSW) and *Fury S*. *Peta* was in the middle of the fleet. Entering the third lap, *Fury S* had the lead from *Taubada* and Western Australia while *Rapid*, sailing his best race, followed up. *Peta* improved her position greatly and moved into seventh. *Bacardi* had dropped back to 12th. The two leaders held their positions to the line while *Bacardi* improved brilliantly to take third.

As they went into the fourth heat, little separated the first three boats in the progressive point score. *Taubada* was ahead of *Peta* followed by *Fury S*.

At the end of the first lap, *Galaxy* (K. Taylor, Vic) held the lead from *Taubada* and *Peta* while *Fury S* filled fourth. *Galaxy* retained her lead while *Fury S* gained third from *Peta* which dropped to fifth behind *Vandal* (G. Senior, NSW). At the line, it was *Galaxy* followed by *Peta* which sailed very fast to gain second. *Taubada* sailed her worst race, finishing fourth behind *Fury S*.

At the start of the fifth heat, *Peta* had to gain at least second position to be sure of the title. If *Fury S* could notch her second win and *Peta* take only third, points would have been level.

It was *Peta's* day however. The light, five knot sou' easter was made to order and she led from the start to finish, thus clinching the title. *Bacardi* put in her best performance to gain second from *Taubada*, while *Fury S* was sixth, losing second position in the final points score.

Peta, with three firsts and a second (after dropping a 10th), comfortably won the series from the consistent *Taubada's* second, three thirds and a fourth.

A special entry in the series was *Jo*, an experimental boat built to extreme tolerances and sailed by Doug Jeffkins, national champ in 1968. Placings would have given her sixth in the final list had her score been counted.

Final placings were:

Peta (R. Lowndes, NSW), 6321; *Taubada* (I. Hughes, Vic), 5853; *Fury S* (J. Manfield, Vic), 5790; *Galaxy* (K. Taylor, Vic), 5354; *Bacardi* (P. Peelgrane, NSW), 5350; *Deb* (R. Naughton, NSW), 4941.

—MALCOLM ALEXANDER