

NSW 16FT SKIFF ASSOCIATION
MINUTES OF CLUB COMMODORES MEETING HELD 17/5/08
AT MANLY 16FT SKIFF SAILING CLUB

Meeting opened at 1.15pm (preceded by lunch, commencing at 12.15pm).

PRESENT: Lloyd Mulholland (Chair), Michael McMahon, Craig Corke, Troy Dobinson, Craig Nicholls, Chris Mulholland, Steve Ward, Riv Robson and Paul Linnett.

APOLOGIES: Dave Mitchell (Drummoyne); Joe Walsh (St George); Todd Lindsay (IYC); Todd Anderson (Port Hunter) and Mark Graham (13ft skiffs).

CLUBS REPRESENTED: Belmont, Manly, Drummoyne, Georges River and Illawarra.

Lloyd Mulholland thanked the Commodores for attending. This is the sixth year that this forum has been held and the consensus continues to be that it is still worthwhile on an annual basis as it provided a means for clubs to share information and ideas.

Lloyd then invited each Commodore provide a report on their own club and that any issues be discussed as they arise.

Steve Ward (Georges River)

- There were 7 registered skiffs this season, however, their weekly fleet was boosted at various times during the season by 3 or 4 Middle Harbour boats;
- Expects 2 new boats next season, with two further expressions of interest;
- The Club has 40 Lasers, 6 Herons, 26 Sabots; 12 420's, 6 Cherubs and a small fleet of resurrected Flying Ants;
- Junior sailing takes place on Sunday morning;
- Wished to clarify reports that the Club was in the hands of Receivers;
- The truth is that Club is in a tight financial situation with a cashflow problem, mostly brought on by the smoking ban (introduced by the State Government) and some poor decisions by the Board and management over recent years; Pokie revenue has dropped by 20% since the smoking ban was introduced and this has not helped;
- Nonetheless, they are NOT in receiver's or administrator's hands, nor has the Board or any Director, for that matter, been sacked;
- They have recently appointed a new Secretary/Manager who has been given a wide mandate to take steps to rectify their financial performance; this has resulted in heavy cost cutting across the board, which has also impacted on their sailing division; prizemoney for the 2007/08 has currently not been paid, but Steve is confident that it will be at some stage over the next few months;
- The Board and management are currently looking at their marketing strategy, rearranging some of the Club layout, introducing a possible coffee shop, more poker machines, including some in an "outdoor" area;
- Steve is confident that with the understanding and support of members and sailors that the Club will commence to trade out of their current situation.

Paul Linnett (Illawarra)

- IYC had 8 skiffs registered this season, with 8 regular starters; there is an indication that the situation will improve next season, with Australian Championships to be held at IYC; Phil Bower is returning, although the skiff "Vollers" crew have dropped out;
- Their Flying Ant fleet continues to grow and they again achieved good results in this season's National Championships again, the best being a 3rd place overall;
- There has been a push to get kids to move from the Skyriders to Flying Ants;

- The 29er fleet dropped off after their Worlds held in Melbourne during January, there has, however, been a move to pursue 420's; there is some interest, but only minimal in the 13's;
- There has been coaching carried out amongst their juniors by Nathan Outridge;
- The Club itself is travelling ok; the new Secretary-Manager (Scott Hawkins) appointed during last season seems to be doing a good job;
- The Club has built an open deck on the western side of the Club to help minimise the impact of the new non-smoking rules; they are also looking at putting some pokies downstairs, adjacent to the current function area;
- Plans for the Nationals are progressing; there has been some problems with obtaining sponsors with the condensed period of the Championships (over 7 days), but they are working on this.

Troy Dobinson (**Belmont**)

- Indicated that their fleet had dropped slightly from last season; they had a fleet of around 23 starting each week; there should be about the same next season;
- Expects that the hosting of the Australian 16ft Skiff Championships by the Club in 2009/10 could boost their numbers again;
- Their Pelican fleet has increased again in popularity this season;
- Cherub and Laser fleet going well;
- The 29er fleet has dropped off, particularly since the Worlds in January; if they do not maintain a minimum number of about 12 they may be dropped next season;
- The Club is trading well with another strong year;
- New “no smoking” changes last July has had some impact on poker machines, but they have created an outdoor gaming area on the western side of the Club;
- On the positive side, the smoking ban seems to have lead to an increase in their catering and food sales;
- The concrete cancer problem with the section under the Club facing the Lake continues; they are still locked in litigation with the builder (Leightons); court case is next month; the Club may be up for around \$2.5 million in costs to rectify the problem, if they lose the case.

Riv Robson (**Drummoyne**)

- Indicated that their fleet had dropped this season with about 6 boats starting each week; expect to stay the same next season, with one loss and one gain;
- Junior numbers are down a little, with training sessions on Sunday mornings;
- TS Hartley and Trailer Sailor fleets are going well;
- Approval has been given by Maritime Authority for a 22 berth marina in front of the Club, but Board is undecided about proceeding; Council approval has yet to be sought;
- The Club is to carry out further extensions on the eastern side, with the DA having been approved by Council;
- Club is still running ok, although pokies are down by \$90,000 for first half of the financial year; a small area has been created outside for smokers; despite the pokie revenue reduction, the Club has still managed to reduce its mortgage debt.

Craig Nicholls (**Manly**)

- The Club's fleet increased slightly this season with 27 registered skiffs and 21/23 regular starters; there may be a couple of extra boats next season;
- There was a fleet of 10 13ft skiffs regularly sailing this season; expects a fleet of around 13 next season (maybe up to 16);
- A much closer bonding had been established between the 13 and 16 fleet this season with the 13s now sailing every week with the 16s on a Saturday afternoon;

- The Club won the Nationals for all fleets that we sail – 16's, 13's, F11's and MJ's;
- Flying 11 fleet were about 22 this season, whilst the MJs were around 17; both fleets are expected to increase again next season;
- The Learn to Sail programme continued season and put through 60 kids aged between 5 and 14 (2 x 10 week courses – Sat. morning and 2 x 1 week school holiday courses); six or seven of these kids have moved into our junior ranks;
- Renegotiation of the Club lease with NSW Maritime Authority continues to drag on – MA still seeking 2½% on turnover up to \$4 million then 5% for amount over \$4 million; they also have to pay 2½% on any sponsorships received; this will still increase their rent from around \$37,000 to \$100,000; they have offered a 35 year term, but still have some very restrictive clauses (eg. seeking their approval to sell pokies and changing CEO);
- The Board has decided against pursuing a major renovation project for the club building;
- The Club spent \$400k on sailing last season;
- The Club is still trading profitably, although they too have suffered from a reduction in pokie revenue;
- The Club still has some legal issues in progress with its previous Secretary-Manager who departed in late 2006.

Craig Nicholls (on behalf of Alex Deakin) (**Middle Harbour**)

- Their fleet for this season was 14 registered boats with around 12/14 regular starters; she expected that the numbers would remain the same for next season;
- The 13ft skiff fleet is still small with 3 boats this season, however, she expects up to 8 next season;
- They still have good numbers in their juniors - Skyriders, MJs and Flying 11s;
- The renewal of the lease on their Club premises was still a major issue for them – it has yet to be resolved;
- The Club did not trade that well during this season; a function centre has expressed interest in their vacant area but want at least a 10 year lease.

There was no delegate or report from the **St George** or **Port Hunter** clubs or the **13ft skiff class**.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Courses and race formats - there was some discussion on the variation of courses and race formats being used by clubs; most have tended to go to windward returns, where possible, however, some such as Belmont still retain some triangle configurations; GR have tended to mostly use 2 short races per day format, whilst most other clubs use the traditional “long” race format; Belmont have 4 days per season where they sail two races.
2. Australian Championships -
 - Lloyd asked what the consensus was on sailing races per day during the Nationals; consensus seemed to be 1 race per day, although this was by no means a convincing majority;
 - Some clubs, such as Belmont favoured starting series before New Year, others such as MH say it should start straight after New Year; consensus seemed to be 7 day series during the first week of the new year;
 - Discussion on the possibility of a return to Hervey Bay for 2010/11;
 - There is interest at Belmont in having a series back in Perth; other venues such as Nelson Bay and Jervis bay were also discussed;

- The issue was raised that clubs who seek to host Australian Championship series, if they sailed 16ft skiffs, should have at least one representative at the previous Championships; it was noted that IYC did not have any skiffs entered in the last Championships in Brisbane; there was a consensus that clubs who sought to host major Championships should support other clubs by attending their regattas and major events.

Lloyd Mulholland once again thanked all those who attended, especially those who had travelled a long distance (from Belmont and Illawarra), and agreed that it had again been a worthwhile exercise. He particularly wished to thank the Manly Club for hosting the meeting and supplying lunch for the attendees.

Meeting closed 2.50pm

NEXT MEETING – Manly Club on 16th May 2009.