

Drummoyne Sailing Club

TS16s 2019-2020 Season Report & Results

The 2019/20 season was like no other. Several races were cancelled because of strong winds, while another ended with every boat becalmed near Mann's Point. There were winds seemingly from around the compass, including a nor-easter Race official Ken Nagle said was the best for several seasons.

And of course the season ended early, after 20 of the programmed 23 races had been sailed, due to Covid-19.

The 2019/20 season was the TS16s' 51 st at Drummoyne Sailing Club. Between them TS16 sailors have accumulated hundreds of years of membership of the Club. A number are life-long members of the club, having started in Sabots and VJs and competed in different classes over the decades. Several were new to the Club this season.

There were 17 boats registered, but only 14 raced.

The 2019/20 season saw the return of the formidable team of Eric Partland and Gary Wills in Uncle Norm. Eric, in Uncle Bob and then Uncle Roy, won the TS16 championship every year from 2005/5 to 2017/8, except for 2010/11. They took last season off, but Eric and Gary returned this year in Uncle Norm.

Uncle Norm was built in 1970 and is the oldest boat in the DSC fleet. It was most recently owned by TS16 stalwart Norm Thompson, who sailed at Saratoga. After Norm passed away, Eric bought the boat and changed its name from Exit to Uncle Norm. Eric said Norm had been a dear friend since they raced 12 footers at Balmain in the 1960s.

It took half a dozen races for Eric to get the boat tuned to his satisfaction and to start winning races again. Eric started sailing at DSC in the VJs when he was 10, and Gary began in the Sabots, and their long experience on the local waters make them hard to beat. Uncle Norm finished the season triumphant, winning the TS16 Championship, the Summer Point Score and the Fastest Point Score and was second in the Season Point Score and the Spring Point Score.

The club welcomed new members Darren and Kylie Chignell who sail Aeolian. Darren is a former champion windsurfer, and Kylie had never sailed before, but they quickly learnt the ropes, and steadily improved throughout the season. They won the Jack Gilliard Memorial Point Score, came second in the Summer Point Score and third in the Season Point Score and the Spring Point Score. Darren said he became interested in the TS16s because he had always loved wooden boats, he wanted to teach Kylie to sail, and he thought the TS16 was a good boat to learn on. Darren said he received a lot of help and encouragement from other club members and his sailing experience with the DSC TS16s has been excellent.

Peter Barnes, a long-time DSC sailor, after a period away from the water, made a stunning return sailing in Hironnelle with Geoff Smith. Geoff, who owns and built Hironnelle, likes being a for'ard hand, so Peter skippered.

Peter joined DSC as a junior, sailing in the Flying 11s. Some of the boys he sailed against as a junior, he found himself sailing against this season in the TS16s. His father, Keith, had a TS16, and Peter sailed with him, so he was familiar with the class.

Hironnelle won its first two races, winning handicap and fastest time in both.

Peter and Linda Deall also joined, but while they took their boat Merlot out during the week, they didn't race.

Racing brings many small victories. Among them was Ten's win on handicap in the last race of the season. Father and son team, Ken and Ian Caldwell have trailed the fleet for much of the past two seasons. But with Ian on the tiller in the last race, and Ten on the highest handicap, they lead from the start and never relinquished their lead. Ian was thrilled to record their first win. "We never expected to come first. Most weeks we're happy if we complete the course." He said they had received a lot of help from other TS16 sailers who were always willing to offer advice. "It's a great club," Ian said.

Ron Johnston, who sails Annette with his grandson, Ben Speed, won the Season and Spring Point Score, and came third in the Summer Point Score and Fastest Point Score. The Johnstons like to keep the point score in the family.

Ron's sons, David and Russell Johnston, sail Murphy's Law. Last season they won the clean sweep of the point scores. This season Murphy's Law won second place in both the Don Jelf's Memorial Point Score and the Jack Gilliard Memorial Point Score.

Chris Giaquinto, who sails Helen Joy with Keith Carter alternating with Ross Pollitt as crew, won the Don Jelfs Point Score. Helen Joy also won three races, a small club joined by Hironnelle and Ella, sailed by Bob Russell and Nick Broughton.

Other race winners were Tranquil, Neil Johnson and Brett Pollitt, who won two, and Ultimately Sinister, Neil Bilsborough and Denis McDermott, who won one. Tranquil and Ultimately Sinister were highly competitive, coming second and third respectively in the Championship. There was every chance the unsailed final championship could have produced another result.

Neil Johnson, who is Club President, and Brett are also long time DSC sailors. Brett came to TS16s three seasons ago after a very successful career in the skiffs. Neil Bilsborough is a carpenter and a master TS16 builder, having built several of the fleet and supported others in building their own boats. Denis has perhaps the longest record of sailing with the Club; he first stepped into a VJ at Drummoyne 64 years ago.

The fleet is well matched, with the handicappers doing an excellent job. The result was some very close finishes, with the first four or five boats frequently finishing within several minutes of each other.

In race three, the first Championship race, after keeping within a couple of boat lengths for the entire race, Ultimately Sinister crossed the finish line in front of Tranquil by one second.

In Race 8, which was sailed in a fresh nor-easter which saw TS16s planing down past Cockatoo Island, the first four boats finished within two minutes.

TS16 sailors are good judges of their skills: that day only six boats took to the water, one suffered a breakage and had to retire, so there were five finishers.

Race 15 proved the most challenging. Despite the strong wind warning for Sydney enclosed waters and forecast heavy rain, four boats - Murphy's Law, Helen Joy, Tranquil and Uncle Norm - started. The course was no. 1, Easterly. Conditions at the start, at 2pm, were wet with the wind ranging between 10 and 15 knots.

But when the small fleet rounded, or neared buoy 6 at about 3pm, a huge rain and wind squall hit. The strongest gust was measured at 36 knots ENE. Murphy's

Law, which was over on the Hunters Hill shore, saw the weather coming and headed for the club house. Uncle Norm broke some equipment and quickly lowered the mainsail, and were towed in. By that stage the rain was stinging and the water was streaked white.

Helen Joy and Tranquil headed for the lee of Cockatoo and Spectacle Islands respectively. After the worst passed, both came into the club house under their jibs. All over the harbour boats were capsizing and races were cancelled. It was a credit to the experience of the TS16 fleet that there were no capsizes or injuries. A number of boats competed in the NSW TS16 championship in October and the National Championship over the New Year. In the state championship, Uncle Norm came third, Tranquil fourth, and Vinca, Trevor Bell and Ian Horrocks, sixth. In the National Championship, Ultimately Sinister, skippered by Craig Jelfs, came third, Uncle Norm came fourth and Annette, skippered by Michael Chapman, came fifth.

The Club would like to thank Race Official Ken Nagle, who was awarded a well deserved Life Membership last year, and Denise Walsh for their tireless efforts, week after week, through bitter cold to stifling heat, to enable the Club to race.
By Asa Wahlquist

Results

Championship

1. Uncle Norm, Eric Partland and Gary Wills
2. Tranquil, Neil Johnson and Brett Pollitt
3. Ultimately Sinister, Neil Bilsborough and Denis McDermott

Season Point Score

1. Annette, Ron Johnston and Ben Speed
2. Uncle Norm, Eric Partland and Gary Wills
3. Aeolian, Darren and Kylie Chignell

Summer Point Score

1. Uncle Norm, Eric Partland and Gary Wills
2. Aeolian, Darren and Kylie Chignell
3. Annette, Ron Johnston and Ben Speed

Fastest Point Score

1. Uncle Norm, Eric Partland and Gary Wills
2. Tranquil, Neil Johnson and Brett Pollitt
3. Annette, Ron Johnston and Ben Speed

Spring Point Score

1. Annette, Ron Johnston and Ben Speed
2. Uncle Norm, Eric Partland and Gary Wills
3. Aeolian, Darren and Kylie Chignell

Don Jelfs Memorial Point Score

1. Helen Joy, Chris Giaquinto
2. Murphy's Law, David and Russell Johnston
3. Tranquil, Neil Johnson and Brett Pollitt

Jack Gilliard Memorial Point Score

1. Aeolian, Darren and Kylie Chignell
2. Murphy's Law, David and Russell Johnston
3. Ten, Ian and Ken Caldwell