

NSW 16FT SKIFF ASSOCIATION
MINUTES OF CLUB COMMODORE'S MEETING HELD 17/6/17
AT MIDDLE HARBOUR 16FT SAILING SKIFF CLUB

Meeting opened at 1.30pm (having been preceded by lunch 12.30pm).

PRESENT: Lloyd Mulholland (Chair), Michael McMahon, Peter Tinworth, Brad Andrew, Paul Linnett, Andrew St John, Robert Flanagan, Robert Wasson, Clint Bowen, Grant Windsham and Philip West.

APOLOGIES: Grahame Dingle (PH), James Griffiths (Bel) and Mark Graham (NSW President).

CLUBS REPRESENTED: Belmont, Manly/St George, Illawarra, Middle Harbour and Darling Point Sailing Squadron.

Lloyd thanked the Commodores, or their representatives, for attending. This is the fifteenth 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 valuable means for clubs to share information and ideas.

Paul Linnett (**Illawarra**)

- The Memorandum of Understanding with Oak Flats Bowling Club expires this year. The relationships between the clubs has been very good. When the MoU finishes, IYC will continue on independently with business as usual.
- The Club is trading really well. It is now among the top three clubs in the Illawarra region.
- There are now 6 coaches for their Junior fleet.
- Their Sabot fleet consists of 12 boats.
- 12 Flying Ants.
- To help fill the gap between the Flying Ants and the 16's, they are starting a fleet of 13ft skiffs next season with the assistance of the Manly Club.
- The 16ft skiff fleet has been struggling over the last season with only 4 boats. Next season, they are expecting 5 to 6 boats and the longer term future looks very promising with the increased focus on their juniors hopefully paying dividends. Wade Hardy is making a come-back and a "fill in" young crew (incl. Dante Olivieri) have bought a boat.

Phil West (**Middle Harbour**)

- Phil welcomed all attendees to the Club for today's meeting.
- Their fleet for last season had 11 registered 16's; indications are that they will have 12 boats next season, with one new young team purchasing a second hand skiff from Belmont.
- Their fleet will now include two new generation skiffs bought from Manly, whilst one of their boats was sold to members of Gosford Sailing Club.
- Their Old Buffers Day was a great success last season. Phil indicated that they would like to start a "series" with old buffers also being invited to other club's event.
- The Club is looking to try and run a Middle Harbour Marathon event on the Saturday of the October long weekend (30th September). Unfortunately, last season's scheduled inaugural event had to be cancelled due to strong winds.

- The Club is well underway with planning for the Australian 16ft (and 13ft) Skiff Championships next season (2nd – 7th January 2018).
- They still have good numbers in their juniors – Poppies (about 16 – training fleet), MJ's (about 8) and Flying 11's (about 7).
- The Poppies are used as their Learn to Sail training boats in partnership with a Balmoral Sailing Club contractor. Funds from Sports Foundation have been used to help finance the junior boats.
- The Club is hoping to reignite their 13ft skiff fleet in 2018/19 with some F11 sailors ready to move through by that season.
- The Club has purchased another polly rescue boat to help support their Junior fleet.
- The Club has continued to improve its financial position and has also seen an increase in their membership. Their relationship with ZEST function group, which has now been in place for about 7 years, is still amicable. Also, the Deck Bar (on the rigging deck) has proved very popular during the summer. The Board is looking at some renovations to enable it to be used all year round.
- The DA lodged by the “Catalina” complex on the southern side of the Club to erect a marina in front of their building was rejected by the Council back in 2015 and has now been rejected by the Land and Environment Court. This is a good win for the future of the Club.

Rob Flanagan (**Belmont**)

- Indicated that their 16ft fleet had remained about the same as last season, with 25 boats registered and most sailing regularly each week.
- Next season they expect their 16's fleet to increase by a couple of boats. A couple of boats have changed hands, and one new generation skiff purchased second-hand from Manly (previously “Fire Stopping”).
- The Club is still offering grants, subject to certain conditions, for Juniors moving up to 16's (up to a maximum of \$2,500 per person, if the junior has sailed with the Club for at least 10 years); the take-up of the scheme continues to be lower than expected, despite the fact that 3 juniors could potentially combine their grants to buy into a reasonable quality second-hand 16ft skiff.
- The Club also still offers advances on prizemoney up half the cost of a new or second hand boat to other members.
- Club racing, as far as possible, is scheduled in an area of the Bay as close as possible to the Club.
- Their Pelican fleet had 26 boats registered with 22 sailing regularly last season; should be about the same next season.
- There were 17 registered F11's, with 14 sailing regularly last season; should be about the same next season
- Chris Nicholson has been employed in a coaching role.
- The 29er fleet is struggling with 6 registered last season and only 3 sailing regularly. At this stage, only expect one next season.
- There is still ongoing discussion at the Club about possibly adopting the 13ft skiff.
- There were 11 registered Cherubs last season with 8 racing regularly each week. A few more Cherubs are expected to register next season.
- There is now a fleet of 26 Full Rig and 11 Radial Lasers with between 15-20 sailing regularly; many are ex-skiff sailors and parents of kids in the junior fleets.
- The Club is still trading well with another very strong year - around \$1 million in profit.

Brad Andrew (**St George**)

- There was a fleet of 7 16ft skiffs racing each week last season; next season they are expecting 10-11 boats, with one new generation boat and two second hand new generation boats.
- There were 12 Moths, 32 MG's, 8 Skates and 6 sailboards. These numbers should continue into the new season.
- The Club, with assistance from Manly, is also adopting the 13ft skiff class, with 4 boats expected next season.
- Junior sailing also restarted last season with 6 MJ's and 3 Flying 11's; this fleet is also expected to continue to grow with the Learn to Sail person from Manly holding classes.
- This growth in all their fleets, primarily 13's and 16's, is the result of a \$50,000 funding stimulus from the Manly Club.
- MG Nationals are to be hosted by the Club at Christmas (2017).
- Trading wise, the Club is still trading in the black, however, the Club building has significant structural issues (rigging deck, boatshed and outside deck upstairs are all out of bounds) and will need to be rebuilt in the next year or so.
- Club is still in talks with Doltone House, with a hopeful resolution by 31 July this year. Once the club starts to re-build, hopefully during this sailing season, it is likely that the sailing activities will have to operate out of shipping containers and marquees located in the car park during this period. The Georges River Club has offered assistance with Saturday sailing activities, if required. The potential rebuild early next year is also the reason why the Botany Bay Championship has been brought forward to late October 2017.

Grant Windsham (**Manly**)

- The Club's fleet remained at 28 registered skiffs last season, with 22-24 regular starters; next season, they should remain at the same number, bearing in mind that the Club has put a cap of 30 skiffs due to rigging restrictions, particularly with the East Esplanade beach area becoming much more popular with locals and tourists.
- There was a fleet of 10-12 13ft skiffs regularly sailing again last season; expect a slight drop next season to around 8, with some going through to the 16's and not as many juniors moving up from F11's. Also, a number of the boats have gone to Illawarra and St George.
- Flying 11 fleet has remained around 25 boats.
- MJ fleet was around 18 boats, with about the same number expected next season.
- The Learn to Sail budget has been increased with the position of Club Coach being advertised soon.
- Boat storage is at a premium and this is still limiting the size of the Junior fleets to some degree.
- Live streaming of races continued last season, but may be restricted going forward into the following season, perhaps being restricted to Club Championships or possible use of other technology (eg. drones). There will also be more of a focus on Junior sailing next season.
- The Club is still trading very well. However, if the expected rebuild of the St George Club goes ahead, the expected financial commitment may see the sailing budget restricted a little in the next year or two.
- The Club will be hosting the F11 Nationals from the 13th/19th January 2018. There are between 80 – 90 boats expected.

Written report from Grahame Dingle (**Port Hunter**)

- There were 4 skiffs sailing regularly during the season with a drop to 3 expected for this coming season.
- There were 9 registered Manly Graduates with 7 sailing regularly, 2-3 regular catamarans, and about 5 regular Flying Ants. About the same numbers expected for these fleets next season, although the Club is struggling to hold on to its juniors.
- Shipping movements have continued at a similar level and, where possible, the Club staggers its start times to avoid them.
- The Club continues to have a good ongoing relationship with Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club (NCYC). They have approached the PH Club about holding a large 2 day Laser regatta next season.
- The Club has also been approached about the hosting of the final two heats of the Cherub State titles next season.
- Financially, the Club continues to trade steadily which has enabled them to make improvements to the premises.

Drummoyne – no delegate in attendance, nor was a written report received.

Robert Wasson (**Darling Point, QLD**)

- There were 6 skiffs sailing regularly last season, with an increase likely to 7 expected for this coming season.
- The Club particularly expressed its appreciation to the Manly (NSW) Club and some of its members for the donation of boats and gear. They also recognised the NSW sailors who sell used gear to the Qld crews for very reasonable prices.
- The 13ft skiff fleet numbers tend to fluctuate, but the Class has continued to provide sailors for the 16s.
- There have been at least 13 training days over the season to try and help grow their junior fleets (Sabots and 13's).
- The Club does have a fleet of Sabots.
- The Club has agreed to host the 2018/19 Australian 13ft and 16ft Skiff Championships. The support shown by club members at the meeting to decide on this question was extremely well attended, a sign of the enthusiasm of its members.
- Rob Wasson considers that the adoption of the Flying 11 would be helpful for the Club.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. 13ft Skiffs - Rob Wasson indicated that the Australian Association (ASSA) was keen to take control of the 13ft Skiff Class. Currently, the NSW Association is fulfilling that role. The ASSA support the view that this Class is an ideal springboard from junior classes to the 16ft skiff. Rob particularly recognised the work of the Manly Club to establish and take this Class to where it is now.

The ASSA have already initiated action to repair the 13ft hull mould to try and arrange for a competitive, reasonably priced hull/sail package for the Class, similar to the new generation 16's. Rob recognised that the NSW Association was footing the repair bill for the mould (up to about \$8,000).

2. Australian Association (Clint Bowen)

There will be a rebirth of the ASSA website in the next few months. It will include things like on-line measurement registration.

Clint recognised the funding received this season from all skiff registration fees. This has been a great help in helping to fund the cost of running the ASSA and taking the Class forward.

A further 9 new generation skiffs have been organised during the off season – 5 have been sold and 3 more are still for sale. This makes a total of 26 new generation skiffs over the last 3 years.

The ASSA is still looking for new blood at the Committee level to help support their activities and continue to take the Class forward.

“Bang Marketing” initiative – Clint advised that this had been on hold over the last 2 months or so, as the principal had been away. He guaranteed unfinished work would now be completed. The primary focus will be on juniors, as they are our future. A particular focus will be on attracting females to the Class and also social media. The company will also be pushed to continue the pursuit of a Class sponsor.

3. Moulded Sails (3Di sails) - Rob Flanagan raised the question of this new emerging technology. He indicated that, at the moment, a new No. 1 mainsail would cost \$6,000, approximately double the price of a new current mainsail. The new sails are currently being marketed by North Sails. At this stage, the technology is only available for a mainsail.

Discussion followed and it was unanimously agreed that, at this stage, the cost of the technology could potentially undo all the work over recent years of reigning in the cost of a 16ft (and 13ft) skiff (ie. the new generation skiff package). Only a select few could afford that sort of cost differential. As such, those present at this meeting felt that, until the relative cost of the technology became more competitive with current mainsail costs, it would be appropriate to ban it from the Class. It was agreed to refer the matter to the Specifications Committee for further discussion and make a ruling, if they consider it appropriate, or recommend an appropriate NoM to be submitted to all member clubs to change the Class Rules.

Meeting closed 2.45pm

NEXT MEETING – to be held at the Middle Harbour Club on Saturday 16 June 2018, commencing at 12.30pm.