

GRAND PRIX IV REPORT

ZULULAND YACHT CLUB – 20, 21 MAY 2006

Welcome to the Kingdom of the Zulu, with it's magnificent winter weather, fair winds and great sailing. Yeh right ! The sailing was great, the winds were fair at times and yes the weather was magnificent. The kind of magnificent that aspiring meteorologists and global warming activists pray for.

Grand Prix IV, was due to have been held offshore Durban over this same weekend, but through logistical problems experienced by the host club, the PYC, it was decided to move the event to Richards Bay. This was not ideal as the Durbanites did not get their home finale, but time did not allow for a postponement of the event. Profuse apologies to the competitors were made, but our sailors, being what they are, arrived in the Bay raring to go.



Die hard competitors arrived on the Friday evening, intent on burning meat over iced vitamin H type beverages. Not to be, with a fierce storm bringing rain and wind and hail ! Hail in the Kingdom ? The second time in over 10 years that we could remember ! Still, what with most of the big shots living up this way, someone had to angry sometime. Maybe Zeus had a marital.

Saturday dawned Zululand wintry, with beautiful sunshine and very little wind. Picture perfect, except that we were supposed to be sailing. The wind finally arrived, almost as an afterthought, or maybe with a hangover from the previous evenings shenanigans. The fleet of Optimists, Laser 4.7's, radials and full rigs, 23 in all, launched at around 13H00.

The wind was light, 8 to 10 knots with regular and significant shifts, but we managed 3 races, with the last being shortened. Storm warnings had again been issued, with huge Cumulo Nimbus clouds skidding along on a huge black mass of angry weather. Claire and Emma Walker, having recently graduated to the Laser 4.7 class, got the boys a little more than hot under their windbreakers, winning one each and allowing Sam Hancock to take the third. Bryan Martin hogged the laser radial class with three bullets, as did Jacques Roux in the standard rig.

Racing in the Opti class was a little one sided with Byron Gray taking home 3 bullets, followed by Kim Austin and James Leigh, with Warwick Despy close behind. We had three brand newbies on the water in Ruben Heard, Kirsten Schreuder and Michael McNeill. These guys certainly took to the fray with relish Top guns – be careful. Be very careful, these guys mean business !

Saturday nights traditional initiation of the mere mortals visiting the Kingdom, was “hailed” as extraordinary. Not only did the maritalts of the previous evening resurface, but the hail stones were the size of tennis balls ! As they say, go big or go home. So we did, to the home up the stairs where food was prepared by the servants, the sailors ate heartily and traditional rites were somewhat mixed with vitamin H, OB's, etc being enjoyed. Three hail storms in around 10 years – amazing.

Sunday dawned bright and clear, with a light south westerly building to an overcast 12 to 15 knots by mid morning. We launched the fleet in 15 or so knots, hoping to get in some heavier weather sailing. The 4.7 boys were ecstatic, figuring on sewing their revenge on the girls for their drubbing of the day before. The Optis were flying around, overtaking inverted lasers and hovering rescue craft. The wind, however, was on the increase and at 25 knots, we called it off without a race being sailed. The call was good as the wind continued to build to gusts of 30 plus – not pleasant, very good for drying sails and bodies.

That was it. The end of the KZN 2005/6 Grand Prix Series. The series as a whole has been a huge success. Whilst traditionally an Optimist and a youth series, the lasers have come to the fore in ever increasing numbers, whilst the “Ballies”, have also been putting in an appearance. Whilst not all boats attended all of the events in the series, the final numbers are pretty impressive – 14 Optimists, 14 Laser 4.7's, 13 Laser Radials and 9

standard Lasers – 50 boats in total ! The series has sparked a number of reluctant sailors into action and has spread the word of our great family sport. Congratulations to all of the competitors, families, friends and hangers-on, to the host clubs and their members and to all of those silent enthusiasts behind the scenes who unselfishly put it all together.

The final results or the Grand Prix 2005/6 Series of KZN are ;

Optimists.

- 1st Byron Gray
- 2nd Emma Walker
- 3rd Claire Walker
- 4th James Leigh
- 5th JP Myburgh
- 6th Warwick Despy
- 7th Luke Vogelsang
- 8th Matthew McCaul
- 9th Matthew Gaughran
- 10th Kim Austin
- 11th Michael McNeill
- 12th Brandon Barth
- 13th Ruben Heard
- 14th Kirsten Schreuder

Laser 4.7.

- 1st Vincenzo de Gennaro
- 2nd David Leigh
- 3rd Sam Hancock
- 4th Paulo Marques
- 5th CJ Despy
- 6th Shannon Gray
- 7th Linsay Ferguson
- 8th Stephen Wagner
- 9th Matthew Langton
- 10th Simon Dommett
- 11th Claire Walker
- 12th Matt Griffiths
- 13th Emma Walker
- 14th Rudy McNeill

Laser Radial.

- 1st Bryan Martin
- 2nd Luke Wagner
- 3rd Anthony McMillan
- 4th Stuart Purchase
- 5th Andy Gray (Ballie)
- 6th James Houston

7th Jean-Marc George
8th Byron Watt
9th Jason Smythe
10th Jessica Hogg
11th William Crockett
12th Douglas Rattray
13th Simon Dommett

Laser Full Rig

1st Jacques Roux (Youth)
2nd Steve Martin
3rd Pete Dommett
4th Ian Hogg
5th Jean-Marc George (Youth)
6th Steve Langton
7th Clinton Wissekerke
8th Matthew Gardiner
9th Lionel McCaul

Report by Mike Leigh