

## 2002-2003 Australian National Cherub Championships

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### Rockingham, WA

West Australians Leigh Ashwood and Geoff Longwood ("the Woodies") followed on from their win in Adelaide last year with another decisive victory in the 40th Cherub national titles held from the Cruising Yacht Club at Rockingham, WA.

Their dominance was such they did not have to compete in the final race to win the series. Local knowledge helped them in the early heats, with *In God's Hands* heading left to the shore and finding lifts and flat water. Going into the sixth heat, they required a placing better than fourth to avoid sailing the last heat and with a strong sea breeze forecast for the following day the Woodies were keen to wrap it up in a 10-knot westerly. They were leading by two minutes with the breeze fading, when a course change left them heading to the wrong windward mark and leaving them fourth at the end of the last run. They clawed back the lead on the last windward work to wrap up the series.

The regatta was sailed over a wide range of wind conditions from the typical 22-25 knot south-westerly sea breeze to a gusty and shifty 10 knot north-easterly. The waters off Rockingham are protected by Garden Island, about four kilometres off shore, providing relatively light chop which made upwind sailing close winded and tactical and also provided great off breeze rides without big nose diving risk.

WA boats took four of the five top placings. Victorians Bret Falcon, and Paul Newman finished a strong second and were the best of the 13 visitors from Victoria, South Australia and NSW.

The best female skipper trophy went to Lisa Walters with brother Steve finishing eighth overall on Green Apple Splatter designed by local Cherub veteran Richard Howell and was the only non-Matthews designed hull in the top 10.

- 1, L. Ashwood, G. Longwood (WA), 1-22-1-1-1-dnc, 8;
- 2, B. Frankcombe, P. Newman (Vic), 2-5-1-2-5-7-2, 17;
- 3, R. van Donger, C. Matthews (WA), 3-1-4-3-7-10-6, 24;
- 4, B. Lawrie, J. Henderson (WA), 7-dnc-7-5-2. 5-3, 29;
- 5, H. Warren, B. Wiseman (WA), 53-raf-12-6-6-1, 33;
- 6, T. Fay, M. Duggan (NSW), 10-6-3-4-8-3-16, 34;
- 7, D. Von Felton, M. Von Felton (WA), dnf-9-10-6-34-10, 42;
- 8, L. Walters, S. Walters (WA), 4-4-9.8-14-11-12, 48;
- 9, N. How, T. George (SA), 13-7-12-10-10-12-4, 55;
- 10, A. Forbes, C. Booth (NSW), 9-8-5-9-ocs-17-9, 57.



2002-2003 Australian National Champion *In God's Hands*, sailed by Leigh Ashwood and Geoff Longwood from Western Australia, (Photo by Richard Howell)

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