

## 1975-1976 Australian National Cherub Championships and 1976 Cherub World Championships

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### Henley, South Australia

Combination by the home side was the theme for the fourth World Cherub Championship sailed at Henley Beach Sailing Club, South Australia. For the second year in a row an Australian girl skipper won the world title. Last year it was Mandy Wilmot; this year it was another girl skipper from Sydney's Middle Harbour Nicki Bethwaite. No stranger to the cherub class Nicki was runner-up in the worlds last year as well as being 1975 National Champion in the class.

The world series was sailed in typical fresh South Australian conditions and was quite a contrast to the national titles sailed just prior to the worlds on the same courses; but in a lot lighter conditions. Another NSW sailor, Michael McAlary in *Kai*, won the national series by a clear 20.6 pts from top Queensland sailor, Martin McLean sailing *Vitamin C*.



*Title went to Sydney lass, Nicki Bethwaite. (Photo by Malcolm Gray).*



*Cherub Worlds provided plenty of action with fresh wind conditions off Adelaide's Henley Beach. (Photo by Malcolm Gray)*

In the light conditions of the nationals, McAlary, using Bethwaite hull and spars with Burke sails (NSW) mastered the light conditions so well that no other boat could

match his speed. McAlary not only had superior boat speed. in the light conditions but picked the shifts well to record two wins.

Nicki Bethwaite was considered the skipper to beat before the nationals but after she posted a sixth overall some were beginning to doubt whether she was going to get close to her 1975 form. The first heat of the worlds, however, dispelled any doubts about Nicki being out of form as she powered into second place behind Martin McLean. In heat two, local sailor Geoff Reseigh in *Unique* sailed a strong race to win easily from Rowena Wilmot in *Jet*, with New Zealander Graham Duncalf in *Hush Puppy* in third spot.

The third heat saw McAlary take an early lead followed by McLean and Wilmot. At the finish it was the same order across the line. The fourth heat, sailed in winds of 25 knots, saw the West Australian boat *Slithy Tove* record an easy win from Bethwaite and McAlary. McAlary won the fifth heat, so going in to the sixth heat was leader on points and looked set to win the world title as well as the nationals.

The sixth heat proved to be McAlary's Waterloo as he bombed to 21st place while his points rival, Nicki Bethwaite, finished third and so took over the points lead.

While she had the points lead going into the final heat Nicki needed to place well, and this she did by grabbing a good start and leading from then on to get first over the line and thereby win the title. For McAlary the last heat was the final blow to his chances of making it two titles in a row, as he again bombed to finish 12th. With 47.4 pts lost after dropping his worst place, McAlary finished third overall behind McLean who had a final points tally of 43.7 pts. Nicki Bethwaite ended up with a good winning margin with a final points tally of 25.4 pts.

Most observers agreed Nicki Bethwaite won the series on the strength of good starts, good upwind performance and all round crew work. Nicki's for and hand for both



*Gybe mark fun for Cherubs during Worlds off Henley Beach, South Australia.*

series was her brother Julian. Being one of the Bethwaite family Nicki, not surprisingly, uses a Bethwaite hull and spars with Elvstrom sails. Runner-up in the series, Martin McLean, used the boat he bought from former national champion Ken Baddilley. McLean used old-style de Havilland spars with Cassidy sails. While there were a number of different sail brands in the top ten, there was a noticeable predominance of Bethwaite hulls and spars. The venue for next years world series is Auckland, NZ while the nationals in the class are at the Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron, Manly, Queensland.

### **World Championship Results;**

- 1 Nix (Nicki Bethwaite, Julian Bethwaite, NSW), 2,13,4,2,3,3,1-25.4 points  
(Bethwaite hull and spars, Elvstrom sails)
- 2, Vitamin C (Martin McLean, Hector Robinson, Qld), 1,8,2,7,6,8,4-43.7  
(Baddilley hull, de Havilland spars, Cassidy sails);
- 3, Kai (Michael McAlary, J Watson, NS W) 3,12;1,3,1, 21,12-47.4  
(Bethwaite hull and spars Burke sails);
- 4, Slithy Trove (T. Kenworthy, L. Kenworthy, WA) 30,5,13,1,4,9,2-55  
(Bethwaite hull and spars Elvstrom sails;
- 5, Unique (G. Reseigh, S. Lucas, S.A), 15,1,18,10,2,4,24-72,  
(Bethwaite hull and spars, Power Edge sails);
- 6, Hush Puppy (Graham Duncalf, Neill Strom, NZ), 6,3,14,17,5,6,10-75.1,  
(Murray hull, Baverstock spars, Mitchell main, Speedsail jib)
- 7, Hiawatha (G. Tucker, WA) 12,17,4,0,19,3-76.7  
(Phillips hull, Bethwaite spars, Cassidy sails);
- 8 Jet (R. Wilmot, O. Wiseman, NWS), 7,2,3,28,18,13,22-80.7  
(Miller hull, Speedspars, speedsails).

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