

1998-1999 Australian National Cherub Championships

by Ian Grant

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Brisbane hobby designers Brendan and Mark Matthews revolutionised the exciting Cherub class by designing and building three of the top five in the 1998-99 Australian titles decided on the Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron's Waterloo Bay courses.

The all-angle sailing speed of their Cherubs over a wide range of sailing conditions from light to fresh, particularly in handling the "Waterloo Slop" at pace on the beam-wave running reaches, was a feature of their superiority. At one stage during the series, Brendan and older brother Mark seemed poised for a match race to decide which crew would win Queensland's first Australian Cherub class crown since Ken Baddiley and Rhys Jeffries piloted *Vitamin C* to victory 26 years ago.

Mark and his crew-mate, former world Tasar champion Russell Ford, won races two and three before ongoing mast fractures ended their challenge.

The Matthews' Cherub design features narrow wetted surface lines. They were rigged with Clive Allwood sails. They collectively won five of the seven heats with Brendan's *Back in Black* winning the title with an impressive 28-point margin.

NSW boat *South Park* (Scott Ewings) was the only other one to win a heat besides the Matthews' *Back in Black* and *TNT*. Ewings finished the series with a win to take the runner-up trophy ahead of Queenslander Ben Moon's *One-Eyed Milkman*.

Moon had pace to burn, pulling top fleet results from good starts. *One-Eyed Milkman* was in the front line of heat two when she was holed in a collision.

Brendan Matthews and Allwood's apprentice sailmaker Joel MacDonald were clearly the superior combination taking advantage of a superior speed sailing performance and blending it with smart tactics and a safe and efficient technique to wrap up the title with a race to spare.

- 1, *Back In Black* (B. Matthews, J. MacDonald, Qld) 1-2-2-1-2-1-5, 9;
- 2, *South Park* (S. Ewings, D. Ewings, NSW) 2-1-5-24-4-1-10-1, 37;
- 3, *One Eyed Milkman* (B. Moon, C. Somers, Qld) 6-av pts 7-ocs-6-3-2-2, 42.1;
- 4, *Ric-O-Shea* (G. McKellar, NSW), 52.7;
- 5, *Bit of Movement* (S. Dickson, Qld), 64.4;
- 6, *The Lairy Canary* (T. Fay, NSW), 83.7;
- 7, *Must Go* (B. Tardrew, Vic), 85.7;
- 8, *Up-N-Coming* (W. Howard), 92.

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