

## Firebug New Zealand South Island Championships – March 2-3 2013

By Tom Arthur



Our venue was at a man-made lake about 8 kms from Ashburton. Lake Hood is 2.5 kms long and 2.5 metres deep. Being smallish this lake is perfect for Firebugs because it needs a strong wind to kick up waves big enough to become a problem for their square bows. The fleet was evenly split between 6 juniors and 6 adults, aged from 11 to 73. Juniors being defined as those still attending school.

After sailing out to the course for the first race, the wind died so our race officer, Alison Rutherford, sent the fleet ashore for an early lunch, however, swimming not lunch, turned out to be the main attraction for the younger half of the fleet.

Soon the wind picked up to a sailable level, so off we went again to the course. Alison did a wonderful job getting 4 back to back races off in fickle winds which necessitated several realignments of the course. Having a fleet including young and old reaffirmed one of the reasons why I like sailing Firebugs. There was a lot of banter on the course which you don't get with a fleet of adults. One instance comes to mind when Simon Rutherford, who runs a 'learn to sail' school, was flanked by 3 of his former pupils sailing downwind. Of course they being lighter slowly passed Simon who could be heard loudly complaining that 'it wasn't fair being passed by two boats at once'. Of course these pupils took great delight in giving their instructor a hard time.

After the last race the sailors gathered round for a debrief on the techniques of sailing in the sort of conditions we had experienced, which was about 1-5knots. Mel Selwood coached upwind, Ian Douglas did mark roundings and Tom Arthur spoke on downwind. The overriding message from all three was to ease sheets and sail free and heel the boat.

Sunday, much to the delight of everyone, had a wind of 5-8 knots with enough shifts to create plenty of passing lanes. We sailed 3 races back to back and in these conditions the fleet was far more compressed than the previous day with several close group finishes.

This regatta was the first championship for several of our young sailors and we hope it's light-hearted and friendly atmosphere will encourage them to see it can be fun to sail with other similar boats and geriatric sailors. As for us older types, we love the comfortable cockpit, the challenge of sailing (for us) an underpowered yet nimble boat to its maximum, and the fun that the juniors bring into the regatta.

### RESULTS (after 1 discard)---DNS or DNF = 13 points

Juniors	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	Points	Overall	Junior
Luke Reidinger	6	5	5	4	9	(11)	11	40	6	3
Josh Kilian	3	(10)	7	7	8	5	6	36	5	2
Narottam Royal	5	(6)	3	6	6	4	5	29	4	1
Tom Bennett	(DNS)	7	8	DNS	11	9	10	58	10	5
Makayla Montgomery	(DNF)	9	DNF	8	10	10	7	57	9	4
Arlia O'Sullivan	(DNS)	DNS	DNS	DNS	5	7	8	59	12	6

Seniors

Nick Benfell	7	4	6	5	(DNS)	DNS	DNS	59	11
Simon Rutherford	8	8	(DNF)	9	7	8	9	49	7
Mel Selwood	(4)	2	2	2	2	3	3	14	2
Tom Arthur	1	1	1	1	1	(2)	1	6	1
Ian Douglas	2	3	(4)	3	4	1	2	15	3
Dan O'Sullivan	(DNS)	DNS	DNS	DNS	3	6	4	52	8

*Report by Tom Arthur*