

New Team Sailing Boats for Bay

The Bay of Plenty Sailing Academy Trust launched four new boats on Tuesday, taking its school team sailing 420 fleet to twelve boats, and its total fleet to fifty-five. Special guests at the launch were NZL Sailing Team members Tom Saunders and Sam Meech, both of whom did school sailing using the BoPSAT fleet.

“Some of our boats are twelve years old and have had a hard life” said Chairman Stuart Pedersen. “This makes maintenance increasingly expensive, and leads to frequent disruptions in training due to gear failures. It was time to upgrade our 420 fleet and we applied for funds in May last year. We maintain the boats with a team of volunteers, but we are reliant on funding bodies to keep our fleet up to date, and we really appreciate it when they are able to help us.

”Grants were approved by the Lion Foundation and the Tauranga Energy Consumers Trust in spring 2015, and the boats were ordered. They have arrived in time for term one training on the Tauranga Harbour.

“Our older boats are all numbered, but we decided to name the new ones after four members of the NZL Sailing Team who did team sailing here. Peter Burling is our patron and we didn’t include him among the names. So now we will have Jason Saunders, Tom Saunders, Sam Meech and Molly Meech hitting the harbour again every week, even when their namesakes are off at international regattas!”



Team sailing is the sailing equivalent of rugby sevens. It sees two teams of three boats racing over a very short stadium-type course in a rapid-fire round robin series. Sam and Tom said that it was some of the best sailing fun they have had, and taught them a lot which they have been able to use in their racing since.

Four local high schools will be using the boats starting next week, with a number of local coaches including the yacht club professionals. Meanwhile some of the older boats will be given a spruce up in anticipation of getting team sailing started at Rotorua, where coach Sue Davy is hoping to get a team together this term.

As well as 420s, BoPSAT has plastic Optimists, two handed Topaz, Viper boards and an Omega for learners, and fibreglass Optimists and Bic Techno boards for monthly charter by racing kids. BoPSAT works with yacht clubs, schools and sailing families across the Bay, provides grants to youth who are selected to represent NZ overseas, and sponsors disadvantaged kids to learn sailing through a number of primary schools.

Stuart Pedersen (BOPSAT)

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