

RECORD NUMBERS IN COLLEGE TEAMS RACING BY HAMISH HEY

Last week saw one of the busiest college summer tournament weeks on record, with college teams racing qualifying and ranking regattas in six regions.



The Northern (Sandspit YC), Auckland (Kohimarama YC), Central North Island (Taupo), Wellington / Lower North Island (Evans Bay YMBC), Southern (Queen Charlotte YC) and the BOP Cup (Tauranga YPBC) were all held last week as college teams attempted to qualify for this month's national championships at Sandspit.

Many events saw record entries, with 16 teams in Taupo (including four new teams) and 15 in Auckland (three new teams). Wellington's lower North Island regatta had nine teams, the Southern event had four new teams among the 14 who entered, with some travelling from as far as Wanaka and Dunedin, and even the stronghold Northern event saw new teams and increased numbers.

The Northern event was a tight battle between Wentworth and Kerikeri HS, with the title going to Wentworth on countback. Westlake BHS were third.

In Auckland, Kristin School were again victorious but had to fight hard to beat Westlake BHS (2nd). Auckland Grammar A and Kings College also showed they had some significant capability at the Auckland event and will be strong contenders at the national championships.



(Kristin School won the Auckland teams event last weekend.)

Tauranga BHS dominated the BOP Cup, which served as a warm-up for the Central North Islands, but failed to fire in the latter stages of that event which was won by Taupo's Tauhara College with Napier Girls continuing their strong history at the event to finish fourth.

New Plymouth Boys HS struggled in the light winds in Wellington, which was won by Wellington Combined with the Marlborough contingent of Marlborough Boys and Queen Charlotte College taking out second and third respectively.

Marlborough Boys won the Top of the South (which in fact was all of the south), with Queen Charlotte College second and Mt Aspiring from Wanaka third.

Teams Racing is a great pathway into participation in the sport.

"It's not all about the rock-star sailor in the school," Northern Region regional support officer Hamish Hey said. "It's about the team, and the way the kids all have to work together. The younger or less experienced sailors, those who languish at the back of a big fleet race, find some focus and reward for their efforts that they might not necessarily see in a fleet race or in the fleet race coaching environment. The increased learnings in boat-on-boat positioning, rules and tactics are all things they can take back to their fleet racing.

"It's also a great way of keeping the youth demographic together and dissolve the separate class split that starts to take over as weight and physique start to dictate what a youth will sail. So for regional towns, it can become a real focal point of activity."

It's this focus on keeping the kids sailing together at home that is appealing to the likes of Taupo, Wanaka, Cambridge and Kerikeri as well as new teams from Waikato/Lake Ngaroto, Rotorua, Whakatane, Marlborough, Nelson and Otago.

The growth in school sailing follows a conscious effort by Yachting New Zealand to increase their support of school sailing and provide avenues for better recognition of sailor achievements within the school sporting framework. All the growth has left the New Zealand Team Sailing Association with one of those good problems – resourcing a national event with a record 36 entries.

Results

Northern

1st Wentworth

2nd Kerikeri HS

3rd Westlake BHS

Auckland

1st Kristin School

2nd Westlake BHS

3rd Kings College

Central North Island

1 Tauhara College

2 Napier BHS

3 Tauranga BHS

Wellington

1st Wellington Combined

2nd Marlborough BC

3rd Queen Charlotte College

Top of the South

1st Marlborough BC

2nd Queen Charlotte College

3rd Mt Aspiring College