

British triumph at Coca-Cola Cup



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The 2000 Coca-Cola Cup saw the introduction of a new class of Elliott 6m racing yachts, which earned high praise from the competitors. There was not much new about the winners, however. For the third time, the Royal Yachting Association took home the silverware from this contest, which grows in stature, and in numbers, every time.

The Royal Yachting Association crew of Mark Campbell-James, David Carr and James Ward secured the Coca-Cola Cup youth match racing title for Britain.

Racing on Auckland's Waitemata Harbour took place in mixed conditions, with no wind to start with, but finishing the regatta in light to moderate breezes, excellent conditions for match racing on a harbour that was jammed with yachts competing in a wide range of events.

The victory marks the third time a British team has won this event, which is often referred to as the unofficial world championship of youth match racing. The PYA won back-to-back titles in 1994 and 1995.

"We are very happy with the win," said Campbell-James. The British crew trained hard for this event and are serious about continuing to race on the senior match race circuit, principally in Soling events to start with.

Coming into the Coca-Cola Cup, they were ranked in the top 100 in the world. On the strength of their win, they were hoping to move up the ladder.

Ultimately, they hope to prove themselves enough to attract the attention of a potential British America's Cup campaign, should one materialise.



Royal Yachting Association coach Bill Edgerton had high praise for the regatta.

"This is the future of youth yachting," he said. "It is the best regatta of its kind in the world, whether ISAF want to recognise it or not.

"The boats, the race management, the calibre of the teams, this is the one that everybody wants to win."

The British crew ended the second round robin on equal points with the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron crew of Michael Dunstan, Peter Salt and Andrew Hutchinson.

On a countback, the Australian team emerged as the top team in the round robins. However, in the best-of-three final, the Royal Yachting Association crew won in two straight matches, the first of them made easy when the Australians committed a premature start.

"The standard of sailing was high,"

said Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron racing manager Harold Bennett. "Having a new fleet of boats for this regatta proved quite a leveller."

The new yachts were purpose designed 6m youth match racers from the studio of Greg Elliott, one of New Zealand's leading designers.

The open-cockpit three-person keelboats drew high praise from the competitors, who were out racing the yachts within days of their delivery from the yard.

Third in the series was the team from King Harbor Yacht Club (USA), while 4th place went to the defending champions, Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club of Australia. The club won the event last year with James Spithill on the helm.

Spithill, who went on to skipper the Young Australia America's Cup team at the Louis Vuitton series, was no longer eligible because he is now older than 20. However, the Spithill tradition lived on with his sister, Katie taking charge of the Royal Prince Alfred boat.

Sixteen teams from seven nations took part in the Coca-Cola Cup, the biggest entry yet for this event.

Coca-Cola Cup Results:

- 1 Royal Yachting Association (GBP,)
- 2 Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron (AUS)
- 3 King Harbor Yacht Club (USA)
- 4 Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club (AUS)
- 5 Cruising Yacht Club of Australia (AUS)
- 6 Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron Blue (NZL)
- 7 Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron Red (NZL)
- 8 Royal Perth Yacht Club (AUS)
- 9 Royal Danish Yacht Club (DEN)
- 10 St Francis Yacht Club (USA)
- 11 Wakayama Marina City Yacht Club UPN)
- 12 Yacht Club Punta Ala (ITA)
- 13 Circolo Della Vela Erix of Lerici (ITA)
- 14 Bucklands Beach Yacht Club (NZL)
- 15 Fukuoka Yacht Club UPN)
- 16 Kanagawa Youth Yacht Club UPN)

Rave reviews for new class

The need for jib windows to eliminate a blind spot, an improved vang system, better placement of the jib cleats and better non-skid are some of the constructive suggestions that came from a survey of teams competing with the new Elliott 6m yachts in the Coca-Cola Cup.

These are easy fixes to a new class of yachts that otherwise enjoyed very positive reactions from their first-up users. Some of the yachts were barely finished by the time they were sent into the heat of battle for the Coca-Cola Cup, but they came through with flying colours

James Ward of the winning Royal Yachting Association crew had this to say: "These boats have been great. I think they are brilliant for match racing. They are fast and exciting, which makes the racing great from a spectator's view. I found the boats quite slippery, so they may need some more grip on the foredeck and in the cockpit, but this may improve as the yachts are used a bit more. I system for locking off the jib in breezy weather would be good... All in all, I have enjoyed racing the boats and I think they are great for the job. Congratulations to the designers and builders. Good job."

And from Luca Antonini of Circolo Della Vela Erix of Lerici: "They're OK ... Check 'em out!"

The Coach's View

RNZYS training officer John Weston takes the E SIX for a test run

The Elliott six metre is a new keelboat trainer born out of 13 years of keelboat training experience here at the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron. Greg Elliott has designed her especially for us, using guidelines provided by Harold Bennett.

The design brief included minimising the number of moving parts for maintenance reasons and including a large clean, modern style cockpit which is "user friendly" and comfortable to hike from. The plan should also incorporate the same rig as the previous E5.9 fleet so that sails from the old boats could be interchanged for special events such as the Coca Cola Cup. The result is a brilliant little fixed keelboat which at first glance could be mistaken for a larger Grand Prix One Design.

The hull has a typical "Elliott" straight stem followed by flared sections amidships which taper to give a straight run aft and a narrower full transom. On the waterline she is reasonably narrow, but with the flared sections the crew can project their weight well out by hiking to add to the yacht's stability.

From the bow aft to the widest point on the waterline the shape is very straight with no hollows or bulges which might slow progress through the water.

The keel is a vertical high aspect ratio fin with a bulb and a 1.6 metre draught. The rudder, too, is a high aspect ratio foil which is transom mounted on gudgeons. It does not swing up in line with the design brief limiting moving parts. The deck layout is simple, uncluttered and incorporates some unusual features designed to maximise the space for the crew to work and to trim the yacht both fore and aft and laterally. The most obvious of these features is the absence of mainsheet in the cockpit forward of the transom mounted traveller. After coming forward along the underside of the boom and down to the base of the mast, the mainsheet comes aft with the other sail controls through a tunnel in the floor to the middle of the cockpit. The cockpit extends from the transom forward to the mast and covers two thirds of the deck space. A flat deck takes up the front of the

boat. A hatch allows access to the interior of the hull where lunches can be stored along with the yacht's bucket, sponge and tow rope.

The mast is stepped on the cockpit floor and is supported above this by a gate which is built as an integral part of the deck. The mast itself is a single spreader fractional rig stiffened by an internal sleeve to a point just 1.5 metres beneath the spreaders to lessen the chances of breaking.

Main and headsail halyards are both 2 : 1 so that tensions are easily changed and sail shapes easily adjusted.

Above is a basic description of the yacht but how well does she sail? We launched boat one, christened "Millie" by Sara Roberts, on a very light air Saturday morning. In the five knot northerly I was surprised at how effortlessly she sailed to windward away from the dock and just how easily she turned. Downwind the impression was the same.

After what seemed like hours Harold finally relinquished the helm and I was able to jump aboard from the chase boat to confirm what I thought I was seeing. Space, comfort and ease of movement were the first obvious attributes of the E six but over the next week in various conditions ranging from 10 to 30 knots the highlight of the boat's performance was its predictable good behaviour and stability. In 12 knots of wind on a shy spinnaker reach she was almost impossible to tip over even with the kite over trimmed and the crew weight off the rail. All of the time we were sailing this poorly the helm never loaded up and "Millie" responded as if bolt upright.

After a week of testing with different crews who all found the yacht exciting and easy to sail, my impression was that the E six might be too easy to sail and too fast. But really this simply bears testament to the hours of thought and years of experience that have been a part of this design.

A 30-knot day finally presented itself so out we went to see if the E six would break and whether she was still as well behaved.

With the spinnaker set and the crew stacked in the back four feet of the boat we sailed down harbour at who knows what speed, easily under control even with the pole forward. Upwind the boat was overpowered as was to be expected I still predictable and not too much of a handful. She showed sign of any obvious weakness in layout or equipment, all Harken by Fosters Shipchandlers.

All in all the E six is as close to the perfect youth training keelboat as we are likely to find, a boat in which the sailer will learn to race rather than learning to deal with a boat's idiosyncrasies. The future of youth training is bright!

