

Ballarat Bertie 2016

Ten Sharpies took to the water on 20th February for the annual (when Lake Wendouree has enough water) Ballarat Bertie. Ballarat Yacht Club hosted us, and in usual form the start lines were true for a fraction of the time, as were the beats, reaches and runs. Challenging to say the least for any Race Officer. If you have never been to Lake Wendouree, you have certainly missed out. It was the venue for the rowing for the 1956 Olympics, and is still one of Victoria's major rowing hubs.

Sailing-wise, the race area is about 2 hectares (well, it feels like 2ha) with interesting boundaries including a large reed bed, a peninsular with a flag pole, the shore, and the rowing lanes. The city of Ballarat surrounds the lake, so wind shifts of up to 40 degrees are normal in all breezes. BYC is very friendly and makes visiting Sharpies most welcome each Bertie, which is sailed in conjunction with their own Saturday afternoon racing. The total fleet included Jubilees, Lasers, Paper tigers and a 145. Ballarat turned on a day that even Goldilocks would have liked. The breeze range was 8 to 15 knots and oscillated all day.

The Race Officers started us first. Each race consisted of a triangle, windward & return, another triangle, windward & return, then a beat to the finish. About 30 minutes of racing if you were amongst the first 3 placings.

Stu Quick, our guest helm for the day, is from the Impulse fleet, and had been on a Sharpie a few years ago on the wire. Welcome to the helm of long boats, Stuie!

Race 1 saw a hotly contested start line, and Stuie took us to the first mark in first place. We held the lead and looked famous for the first 30 seconds with the kite up. The first gust from one of the side streets saw our first swim, and most of the other boats sped past. The lake is only a bit over 1m deep, the water is warm, and you stand on nice clean lake weed. Back into the race, and try to catch up. Fortunately some of the others waited for us with their own swimming stunts. We managed to find the same nasty little spot to capsize in the second triangle! Did we mark that on the water? Nice to see Footloose, our old boat, back in the hands of Brian Canny, who we bought her from. Were we last? At least we had lots of room for improvement.

Race 2 saw an entertaining start, and the places changed many times up the first work as gusts and wind shifts played their part. Lots of yelling at the first mark, and off we went with kites up. Incidentally, the kite reach went quite close to the deck of the clubhouse, providing lots of excitement for those lunching on the deck. Places changed during the race as some went for swims, again. We managed to teabag Mick and NOT swim during this race. Our time improved by about 10 minutes, with more improvement possible.

Race 3 was another entertaining start. Places changed constantly, except maybe 1st & 2nd. Figjam had some great racing, with Dave McKenzie trading his A Class cat for the helm, Rob Radnell on wire with Sarah from the Ballarat juniors on the main, and we suspect this will not be her last Sharpie fun. Dave Golding was over

from the Apple Isle, re-acquainting himself with Bertie by steering Psycho Therapy.

Locals managed all the top places, and it's easy to see why. I reckon that if you can do well on Lake Wendouree, you can do well on any lake.

		(1)	(2)	(3)	Overall	
	Ballarat	Bertie	Regatta	2016	Points	Place
Breakaway	642	1	1	2	4	1
Kanga Crusher	831	2	2	1	5	2
Flash as a Rat	750	4	3	3	10	3
Rage Factor	878	3	4	4	11	4
Fig Jam	777	5	8	6	19	5
Old Lonely + Forgotten	847	6	6	7	19	6
Psycho Therapy	835	7	5	8	20	7
Furnace of Affection	810	8	7	5	20	8
Footloose	665	9	9	9	27	9
Screaming Eagle	738	10	DNF 10	DNS 10	30	10

Race 1 Breakaway (1) Kanga Crusher (2) Rage Factor (3)

Race 2 Breakaway (1) Kanga Crusher (2) Flash as a Rat (3)

Race 3 Kanga Crusher (1) Breakaway (2) Flash as a Rat (3)