Geotherm extends 12ft Skiff Australian Championship lead

Defending champions, Brett Hobson and Peter Nicholson (Geotherm) have extend their lead on Day 2 of the 87th 12ft Skiff Australian Championship at Lane Cove, sponsored by Your Move Conveyancing.

A further two races were sailed today, with Geotherm (Sydney Flying Squadron) adding a win and a third place to her scorecard to take a four-point lead over Nick Press and Andrew Hay's Sail Inc. (Lane Cove 12ft Sailing Skiff Club), which wound the day up with 2-4 results.

Press and Hay have long dominated the 12ft skiff scene, with Hobson and his various crew mates often playing bridesmaid. However, since adding Peter Nicholson to the crew, the duo have found their mojo.

"This is our third season together, but we haven't done all that much sailing, because of COVID in 2020 and 2021. And we've had a quiet time this year too, not doing racing the full season," Hobson said of Nicholson.

"Pete's a good sailor, a good guy to have on board. He does a lot of work off the water as well, always thinking things through and tinkering with the boat. A lot of credit goes to him for our speed. We seem to have stepped up a bit since he started with me."

On today's races, Hobson conceded, "It Was exhausting, because of the nor' easter fighting the easterly. The easterly won. The first race was a true easterly, then it started to swing and got fluky, which continued into the second race and it became patchy."

In these conditions, both races could have ended quite differently, as Hobson agreed: "We got out of jail, we were second all day in the first race and jumped into first on the last run. We got a bit lucky. Sydney Sailmakers were unlucky not to win, as they had led until we overtook them."

Geotherm got off the start smartly in the second race. "Then we got caught on the first work in the middle of the course, with all the boats either side of us getting good breeze."

Hobson and Nicholson kept chipping away and fought their way back into the top five. "We got caught in a Press sandwich, fighting with Nick Press (Sail Inc.) and his father Murray (Red Energy).

"We got lucky there as well. We got in front of both (they finished fourth and fifth respectively) and jagged third place," said Hobson, who was unable to catch Terms & Conditions and the race winner, Sydney Sailmakers.

The Brad Phillips and Oscar Wilson sailed Terms & Conditions (SFS) has maintained third place after scoring 4-2, results today and are just a point adrift of Sail Inc.

Meanwhile, the Sydney Sailmakers crew of Henry Larkins and Brendan Jenkins (SFS), made their intentions clear after adding a win in Race 4 (their first) to a third place in Race 3. These results leave them two points behind Terms & Conditions and leaves them firmly in contention for a podium finish with just two races remaining tomorrow.

Larkins, who normally sails 18ft skiffs, is filling in as skipper for Cam McDonald in the Championship.

"I've sailed with Brendan before, but never properly, so it's nice to jump in for the Nationals.

We've only sailed together the last two days and now we're getting used to sailing with each other, it should make it easier for us," Larkins explained.

"We had a good day today, winning the second race after being a bit unlucky with the first race and getting a third place. If we can sail tomorrow like we did today we can definitely make the podium."

Larkins described both races as a game of snakes and ladders.

"There were huge position changes. It was quite challenging to stay ahead. On the downwinds everyone was coming down with pressure, so it was hard to stay ahead of them. It was a pressured situation. Definitely shifty, the breeze was oscillating quite a bit throughout the day."

However, where else would you want to be, as it was another beautiful sunny, sparkling day on the Harbour.

Terms & Conditions has also taken over the top of the handicap leaderboard, from Sydney Sailmakers and Arrogant Frog (Peter and Steve Hill). Just one point separates each of the three crews.

Scores are tight at the top of both the scratch and handicap leaderboards with tomorrow's two races to decide the outcome.

All courses for the Australian Championship are west of the Harbour Bridge in the vicinity of the Parramatta and Lane Cove rivers and taking in some of Sydney's famous islands.

The winning scratch pair will be awarded the Norman Booth Trophy and the handicap winners the Colin Clark Memorial Trophy. There are also trophies for the first Veteran (over 55) and for first Junior (under 25).

Conducted and hosted by Lane Cove Sailing Club on behalf of the 12ft Skiff Association, from Friday 29 to Sunday 31 March, the three-day Australian Championship is sponsored by Your Move Conveyancing and closes the 2023/24 season for the class.

There are 22 skiffs entered, including two Queensland crews, Giddy Up and Tank Girl representing Darling Point Sailing Squadron in Manly.

For all information, including full results on the '12s', please visit:
https://www.skiff.org.au/87th-12ft-skiff-aust-championship

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