

Geotherm strikes first blow at 12ft Skiff Australian Championship

With two races away on Day 1 of the 87th 12ft Skiff Australian Championship at Lane Cove, sponsored by Your Move Conveyancing, reigning champions, Brett Hobson and Peter Nicholson (Geotherm) own the top of the leaderboard after winning the opening race and placing second in Race 2.

Geotherm's crew, from Sydney Flying Squadron (SFS), cannot rest on their laurels though, as hot on their heels and just two points behind are second placegetters from last year, Nick Press and Andrew Hay (Sail Inc.) representing Lane Cove 12ft Sailing Skiff Club (LCSSC).

Terms & Conditions (Brad Phillips/Oscar Wilson), representing SFS, gifted Geotherm a little breathing space on Sail Inc. after winning Race 2. Coupled with a fifth in Race 1, Terms & Conditions is third overall and just one point adrift of Sail Inc.

"It was a good day. Pretty tricky though, especially the second race, it was shifty," Hobson said. "We were second in that one, but we'll take it, as it was a hard one."

In the first race, Hobson said, "We won the after getting a good start. That was important as there were parking lanes everywhere.

"It ended up being a good day. We thought it would be lighter than it was, so it was unexpected and enjoyable.

"We were comfortable in that race. We remained untroubled by the usual suspects. Brad (Terms & Conditions) was getting within striking distance, but capsized."

Hobson added, "It's hard to tell how fast we are in the light wind and it's looking likely it will be the light for the rest. We'd love a third rig 20 knot nor' easter. Fresh, is what we'd love, but I don't think we're going to get that," he ended.

Tank Girl (Ben Guymer/Lachy Pearman) one of two skiffs from Darling Point Sailing Squadron in Manly, Queensland, leads the handicap results on countback to three other skiffs.

This has started a close series both on scratch and handicap with no margin for error.

Racing started at 2.30pm, with Race 2 held straight after Race 1.

The weather was a real treat for competitors in the sunny stakes, although the breeze became tricky by the second race, as Brad Phillips explained: "A variable easterly breeze – and breeze either side of that," he explained.

"We got 7-11 knots. In the first race it built to the 11-12 knot range, but in the second race it dropped off and became variable. Nice flat water though and not too many boats crossing paths."

Phillips and Wilson were doing well in the first race when they came a cropper. "We had a swim. We have to make no mistakes from here against especially the top two crews," Phillips admitted.

“We had a bit of a lead in Race 2, but it closed up, then we jumped away again on the last downwind to the finish. There were a few snakes and ladders. You could jump away, or you could get caught with no wind and miss out.

“I think there’ll be a few boats close together by the end of the Championship. It’s close now and we’ve got six races in total,” he surmised.

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.

A further two races will be held tomorrow, with the final two races on Sunday, to decide the new Australian champions. 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. There are 21 entries, 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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