

WA State Dragon Championships – Hot Contest revised after Protest in favour of R Lynn.
By Rob Hubbard and Susie Parker

It was a nail-biting finale to the State Championships for the Sir Charles Gairdner Trophy on 24-26 February 2023 with all podium places being contested right up to the end of the last race – and in hind-sight, a contested protest result to be determined!

Race Officer Rob Hubbard hailed it as one of the best regattas he had been involved with based on the quality and closeness of the sailing, and the sportsmanship shown both on the course and at the Clubhouse.

The 17 starters were warned by the RO that he'd not hesitate to hoist the U Flag after the first general recall and apply it for the rest of the regatta. But that was not to be. Apart from a few individual recalls, all eight races had clear and fair starts.

Skippers and tacticians were challenged by winds from the east to the south west. There were lifts and breaks of around 20 to 30 degrees and large differences in pressure across the course in all races, requiring sailors' nous in navigating which course to take and the constant need to change gears to optimise speed.

At the end of Day 1 Willy Packer in *Scoundrel* and Richard Lynn in *Gordon* had both taken out first places. By the end of Day 2, Richard and Willy were still vying for the top spot, whilst there was a group of four with only four points (net) between them - Grantham Kitto in *Hotspur* (21 points), Trish Ford in *Canewdon Witch* (21 points) Rob Campbell in *Penny Farthing* (22 points) and Peter Bowman in *Akula* (25 points).

The battle had hardly started though. Willy and Richard had a protest to sort out and Richard had finished an unusual 11th place in Race 6 – it might have been nerves from having father Bun watching from the spectator boat *Swansong*! Rob Campbell had a retirement to carry. Peter Bowman had ground to make up on the last day. Trish had some mid-fleet placements to shake off. Andrew Foulkes had dropped placings when caught up in a skirmish between *Penny Farthing* and *Relentless*. And just to mix it up, both Grantham Kitto in *Hotspur* and Sandy Anderson in *Blue Marlin* had joined the elite FOTL* group!

With such competitive racing the RO was impressed to have only a few protests to consider and claimed it was testament to the sailors' knowledge of the rules and their preparedness to sail within those rules. However, Mark Cubitt was a man to be avoided if things weren't going well for a skipper and crew. He kept a close watch over the weekend's proceedings and was amused by Andrew Foulkes' issues with mast and halyards, awarding Foulksie Mug of the Regatta. Seems its left to me to call out Mark himself (together with Penny Anderson, Brad Stout and Rob Campbell) who had their own mast/halyard problems twice with Penny being strung up by the spinnaker halyard and then *Penny Farthing* losing the back-stay in an altercation.

On Sunday, 100 or so sailors, volunteers and friends enjoyed a relaxing wind-down at the Club as the results were announced:

The inaugural **Bun Lynn Trophy** for first place in the first race was awarded to Willy Packer in *Scoundrel*. Willy warmly acknowledged the extraordinary commitment, or better, love of the sport and especially of the Dragon class, that Bun has shown in his 81 years of RBYC membership.

The **Tony Fitzgibbon Trophy** for consistency was won by Jennie Fitzhardinge. A well-earned outcome for both a determined skipper and a favourite old girl of the Club, *Aeolus*.

The coveted **Sir Charles Gairdner Trophy** for State Champion 2022-23 was eventually presented to Richard Lynn in *Gordon*, who battled it out with Willy Packer on water, in the Protest Room and subsequently on appeal.

Championship:

1st *Gordon* – Richard Lynn, Ethan Prieto-Low, Adam Brenz-Verca

2nd *Scoundrel* - Willy Packer, Julian Harding, Jock Packer

3rd *Akula* – Peter Bowman, Steve Cole, Jeremy Shellabear

Consistency:

1st *Aeolus* – Jenny Fitzhardinge, Mat Selby, Daniel Arndt, Peter Hood

2nd *Blue Marlin* – Sandy Anderson, Susie Parker, Caroline Gibson, Fred Haes

3rd *Sea Joy* – Gerry McGann, Robyn Johnston, Jill Darby, Shane Atwell

WAIDA President David Meagher welcomed Fred Haes, President of the Australian International Dragon Association and thanked the following for their dedication and commitment to the Regatta and Dragon Class:

Andrew Locke Patron of WAIDA; Bun and Dee Lynn and the Lynn family for the donation and presentation of the Bun Lynn Trophy; Tony Fitzgibbon for the donation of the Consistency Trophy; Yacht Grot for the donation of gift vouchers; Steve Cole for the donation of Cape Olives Olive Oil and Hamman Soaps; Rob Hubbard Race Officer; Debbie Blaauw and Sharon Skinner RBYC Sailing Operations; Kevin Palassis Class Captain; Ian Slater spectator boat *Swansong*; and George Vaskovics and Lindsay Preece for photography.

RO's Start Boat Team – Deb Henderson, Sandra Whelan, Jonny Fullerton, Katie Mileham and John Anderson.

Mark Layers – David Riddle, Mark Crier, Richard Wright, Tony Vlachou, John Anderson, Commodore Peter Chalmer, Peter Masee, George Vaskovics and Matt Zimmerman.

Protest Committee – Ian Burvill, Kim Lawrence and David Riddle.

WAIDA Committee – John Anderson, Ian Malley, Ray Chatfield, Rod Williams, Jack Lynn, Kevin Palassis, Susie Parker, Robyn Johnston, Sandy Anderson, Willy Packer and David Meager (President).

A very special thank you to John Anderson for his oversight and guidance with the planning and organisation on and off the water.

*First Over The Line