



Howie Hamlin and Fritz Lanzinger to windward of Australian champion B2 (Greg Pratt/Paparazzi picture).

Headline acts

The SAP 505 worlds in Adelaide brought together some of the world's best dinghy sailors, by competitor Jordan Spencer

ACCORDING to the competitors, the 2007 SAP 505 world championships were awesome. The balance of sailing and social events was spot on, making their journey down under memorable.

Held in Adelaide and hosted by the Brighton & Seacliff Yacht Club, the worlds brought together many of the best dinghy sailors on the planet. The headline acts included former 505, 18Ft and International 14 world champion Howie Hamlin, three-time 505, 49er and 18Ft skiff world champion Chris Nicholson and Ian Pinnell, winner of 35 world, European and national championships. Beyond them, there was a plethora of brilliant sailors.

The 505 is a wonderful boat to sail, plus the class includes some really great people, which makes competing at world championships all the more worthwhile. This time around there were 93 boats from 13 countries, with the Australians outnumbered by the overseas sailors.

Several things made the event so successful. Brighton & Seacliff YC has a strong tradition with the 505s, built from the 1960s when their sailors won the worlds three times. When B&SYC hosted their first 505 worlds in 1966, it was also the first time anyone had hosted a world championships in the southern hemisphere. They wanted it to be great then and all the members and the volunteers wanted it to be great again this time.

B&SYC is not a rich club, so it didn't have money to throw at the event; what it did have was people. Over 75 people volunteered their time, their homes and their expertise to make sure all the competitors could enjoy themselves. The overseas competitors were blown away by this generosity, particularly the billeting. It made the event for many of the competitors.

However, what made the event for the organisers was Hasso Plattner. Many of you will know of Hasso as the man who owns the super-

maxi *Morning Glory* and is one of the founders of SAP. Beyond that, Hasso is a great guy who loves sailing 5-ohs and who just happens to be pretty good at it too. It was SAP's sponsorship of the worlds that made the whole thing a success.

The sponsorship came about in a funny way. The organisers had gone down the normal path of approaching companies, including SAP Australia. Unfortunately they didn't get the response they were seeking. However, Pip Pearson, long-time 505 man and international class president for many years, was introduced to Hasso at the 505 worlds in Germany. Pip mentioned the approach to SAP Australia and their lack of interest. Hasso, said "Oh" and wandered off, pulling his phone out of his pocket. Several minutes later he wandered back and said, "Pip, I would call them again, I think they may be interested now."

With SAP's sponsorship, the organisers were able to offer the lowest entry fee in over a decade and the best container subsidy for overseas competitors ever. What could have been a

prohibitively expensive event became an affordable one.

Beyond that, Hasso set up another fund to sponsor a dozen individual boats to come to the worlds. This targeted youngsters, women, current and future stars both locally and overseas and ensured the quality of the fleet here and at future events. It was a generous approach giving the opportunity to some competitors who probably wouldn't have been able to come otherwise.

The organisers also chose to utilise tradition. Class legends and former 505 world champions Bryan Price and Sir James Hardy spoke at the pre-worlds and worlds opening nights and had the crowds in stitches. Many more names from the past came out to play, telling stories, buying beers, providing spectator boats and creating a vibe that had our overseas competitors enthralled.

Three regattas in one

The event itself was essentially three regattas in one. First was the pre-worlds, which for the Australians doubled as the Australian titles. It was a short but intense event with two long races each day over three days.

In the leadup a huge tropical ridge formed over SA and dropped heavy rain for four days on Adelaide, a place which hadn't seen any real rain for more than 200 days. With the rain were gales that didn't abate until day one of the pre-worlds, when Hughie finally turned on perfect conditions.

For the three days of the pre-worlds, the sailors got to experience perfect blue sky, ocean sailing in stable sea breezes between 12-25kts. It was champagne stuff, particularly for the US sailors. Mike Martin and Jeff Nelson were in awesome form, winning comfortably. Second were Howie Hamlin and Fritz Lanzinger. Howie is a long-time 505 guy who prior to this worlds had won in 1999 (with Mike Martin) and had come second six times.

Those two boats had a sizeable gap from the British crew of Ian Pinnell and Steve Hunt in third, and it looked very much like the rest of the fleet were to be spectators.

BELOW: One of the 505's strongest supporters Hasso Plattner and crew Peter Alarie of Germany, sailing to 21st overall (Greg Pratt/Paparazzi pictures).

BOTTOM: Fourth-placed Ian Pinnell's *Musto* (8882) takes the low road.



The Super Danes,
Jan Saugmann and
Morten Ramsbaek.



...est placed of the Australians (and national
...ampions again) were Michael Quirk and Geoff
...e of NSW in fifth. From there you had to go
...to 11th to find Bill Cuneo and John Warlow
...Queensland.

...however, it was only the pre-worlds and as is
...the case in our sport, especially in a deep
...the lead-up event is not a great form guide
...the main event. And as we all know, during a
...is the most common phrase you will hear is,
...weather is never normally like this."
...ese worlds were no different. A change came
...gh during the layday between events and
...ed a blustery, switchy southerly on the
...e, then later in the week it was fairly light.

Unusual conditions

There were nine races over seven days, with competitors able to drop their worst two to calculate their overall score. Three races were held over two days in the southerly, with big direction and pressure changes. Mike Martin and Jeff Nelson again excelled, as did their fellow US crews Nick Adamson and Steve Bourdow and Mike Holt and Carl Smit. But there was plenty of excitement for the locals after Sandy Higgins and Paul Marsh from the home club posted two wins in the first three races.

After two days of fun, the unusual conditions came. The racing did move into a sea breeze pattern with beautiful, sunny and warm days,

but unfortunately there was little tide and when there was tide, it didn't flood till middle or late afternoon. This meant there was no cold water in the Gulf to create the thermal effect. So most of the racing was in the 8-12kt range on flat water - and the Euros loved it.

The Super Danes

Jan Saugmann and Morten Ramsbaek, affectionately known as the Super Danes, won the event and were models of consistency throughout. The first three races were their worst but they weren't bad results, starting with a 20th and then picking up a sixth and seventh.

The Super Danes jumped into the 5-ohs 13 years ago after doing an Olympic campaign in the 470 class and like many, they thought a win at world level would come quickly. However, they discovered it's tough going in 5-oh land, finding themselves in the 20s overall. Since then they have been slowly working themselves to the front of the fleet. Prior to this win, their best result was fourth two years ago in Germany. In fact before this event they hadn't managed to win a race at world level.

That was all to change in race four. The third day of racing was held in a 'dodge' tide and as such there wasn't much wind. Jan and Morten worked the right side of the course, rounded the top mark second and then unleashed their weapon, sailing fast and low downhill and into the lead for their first win.

Uphill the Super Danes had great speed and phenomenal height. Probably not the best height - I think Howie and Fritz had that - but right up there. What they did have was some serious speed downhill. Whether it was technique or equipment, I don't know. They had worked on spinnaker shape with Bojsen-Muller sails prior to the event, and in the light stuff they also had the skipper trimming the spinnaker. They said this gave them the advantage because it gave the skipper a better feel and therefore he used less steering.

From there, the Super Danes posted third, first, fifth, first and a DNS. They won with a race to spare, sailing a 13 year old boat against one of the strongest fleets seen in several years. Impressive.

Seven times second

Poor Howie Hamlin picked up his seventh second place overall. When the wind lightened off, he and Fritz came to the fore. They are brilliant sailors and they really had some extra gears in the flat water. Prior to the regatta I had spoken to Howie about the depth of the fleet and he said, "It's tough, man. A lot of people outside looking in don't see any big names and think it's not hard, but I am telling you, these guys are big names. The difference is, they choose only to sail 5-ohs, so no-one knows how good they are.

"I don't care how big a name you are, you just can't step into a 5-oh and go well... Well, only Chris Nicholson could, but that's because he is the greatest dinghy sailor on the planet."

After the regatta, when accepting his trophy for second, Howie said, "Sometimes I hate winning this thing; sometimes it's an honour. I tell you, this time it's a real honour."

It was a tough battle for second place. Going into the last race Mike Martin and Jeff Nelson were lying second, Howie and Fritz third, and the top Australian boat of Sandy and Marshy fourth. Between them were just two points. Just another few points back were Ian Pinnell and Steve Hunt from the UK.

Martin and Nelson, a big combination, weren't enjoying the lighter winds after their great start to the regatta, posting their worst result, (25th) in the second-last race. Higgins and Marsh also had a form slump in the middle of the regatta when the wind lightened, but a change of main had got them back up to speed. As for Pinnell and Hunt, well they were nice and consistent right across the board.

Unfortunately for Mike and Jeff, they also posted their second worst race (15th) in the last race and dropped from second to fifth. Howie and Fritz's second moved them to second overall, while the local boys Sandy and Marshy posted a seventh to gain third overall, and Pinnell and Hunt's fourth moved them into fourth overall.

RIGHT: Nationals winner for the second time and 11th overall in the worlds, Michael Quirk and Geoff Lange.

BELOW: Did someone say 'buoy room'?





ABOVE: Australia's best performing team and the home town favourite, Sandy Higgins and Paul Marsh (Greg Pratt/Paparazzi pictures).

Australians' new era

Beyond that was a mix of US and European boats. The next best Australian boat was the one I sailed on with Robbie Deussen, in tenth. It was our first run at the worlds together and we were pretty happy with the result. Next were Michael Quirk and Geoff Lange in eleventh.

Three-times 505 world champions Chris and Darren Nicholson literally turned up from NSW the day before the worlds, pulled the cover off their boat and went sailing, the same as they did the last time they raced the worlds in 2002, when they won. This time they could only manage 15th. They are amazing sailors but this time the standard of the field was too high.

There does seem to be a new era emerging in the 5-oh. The Australians put in a huge effort. The Queenslanders worked as a team; they came with a coach and went through debriefings after every race. Quirk and Lange had worked with a coach for two years and there was a class training camp in Sydney during the lead-up to the worlds, but it was nothing compared to what the overseas competitors are doing. Many of them have their boats set up identically and marked identically. They then sail together weekly and share information. As a result, they seem to have so many more gears than the Australian boats. Whilst we could change to three or four different settings, they seemed to have ten.

Winning boats and gear

The Europeans, (and many others) buy the Segelsport package. Put together by Holger Jess (three time world champion), the boats come as a complete package with a tuning guide, standardised fitout and rigging.

In the US, the West Coast sailors have what they call 'Team Tuesday'. Created by Mike Martin and Howie Hamlin, the sailors meet every Tuesday and conduct a series of small races with a coach. All the boats use the same gear and every control line is marked identically. After each race, the winners and the others know what their settings were. As a

result, over the years they have created a very detailed tuning guide.

On the gear front, it doesn't seem to be about having the latest boat. In the top five the Danes' boat was 13 years old. Howie's was older, Mike's was over five years old, Sandy's three years and Pinnell's was a year old.

The Danes had a Rondar hull (not carbon) Superspar M2 mast, Bojsen-Muller sails and a Water Rat centreboard. For the Yanks it was Water Rat boats, M2 masts and Glaser sails. Higgins and Pinnell both went with what their respective shops provided. For Sandy this was a YMS hull and foils, Proctor Cumulus mast and Binks Marine sails. Ian had a Rondar Hull, Cumulus mast and Pinnell & Bax sails.

A lot of long-time 505 sailors were ecstatic about Jan and Morten's victory. The Super Danes are two great blokes, they have been to every event for the last 13 years and they sailed brilliantly. When they went on stage to collect their trophies, the room went nuts, celebrating for them. Jan and Morten, in true Danish style, were going internally berserk.

Results

- Worlds:** 1. 8620 (J.Saugmann/M.Ramsbaek, DEN), (20)-6-(7)-1-3-1-5-1-dns, 24pts; 2. 8266 (H.Hamlin/F.Lanzinger, USA), 7-(15)-9-3-(14)-2-7-3-2, 33; 3. Hawaii Five O (S.Higgins/P.Marsh, AUS/SA), 1-8-1-(28)-12-(17)-2-8-7, 39; 4. Musto (I.Pinnell/S.Hunt, GBR), 3-10-(14)-5-(24)-7-9-5-4, 43; 5. The Black Boat (M.Martin/J.Nelson, USA), 14-1-6-2-9-11-1-(25)-(15), 44; 6. Sherwood Scuba (K.Taucher/J.Bell, USA), 9-7-13-(33)-(35)-6-16-11-3, 65; 7. 8875 (J.Findel/J.Tellen, GER), 11-4-(20)-15-(25)-4-13-19-1, 67; 8. 8081 (N.Adamson/S.Bourdow, USA), 4-2-3-17-15-12-(34)-15-(22), 68; 9. 8903 (B.Herrmann/J.Kleiner, GER), (dnf)-(dns)-11-23-5-3-4-14-9, 69; 10. Commonwealth Bank (R.Deussen/J.Spencer, AUS/SA), 6-(34)-10-10-(21)-8-6-16-13, 69.
- Nationals:** 1. B2 (M.Quirk/G.Lange, NSW), 3-3-1-(6)-2-1, 10pts; 2. Hawaii Five O, 5-2-5-3-4-(6), 19; 3. Daring Kestrel 2 (B.Cuneo/J.Warlow, Qld), 2-7-7-(13)-1-3, 20; 4. Sweaty Betty (N.Lott/B.Franks, Qld), 1-6-2-7-(13)-5, 21; 5. Commonwealth Bank, 4-1-6-(dnf)-6-10, 27; 6. Slam (A.Finglas/T.Watson, Qld), (10)-9-4-1-8-8, 30; 7. Farm (C.Jackson/I.Taylor, NSW), 6-(14)-9-8-3-7, 33; 8. Skat (P.Gray/R.Machin, Qld), 7-4-8-2-(16)-13, 34; 9. Literacy Circle (A.Hewson/K.Sinclair, NSW), 8-10-(15)-5-9-9, 41; 10. Occy (M.Stowell/A.Dean, WA), (dns)-8-12-10-7-11, 48.