

STATE COUNTRY CHAMPION AND RUNNER UP STATE CHAMPION.

On the January long week end 58 of the states best junior sailors made the trip to Kingscote, Kangaroo Island for the State Holdfast Trainer State Titles. Twenty nine boats nominated for the title which was sailed in light winds. Port Lincoln Yacht Club, which has had a long tradition of competing at the event, was represented by Ashleigh Dyer and Marty Hood sailing Scrapatoo. In the past Lincoln has had better representation, but with a lot of this year's Holdie sailors wary of forecast strong winds in Kingscote, they decided not to compete. The state titles consist of a seven race series, with the best six results to count to an overall score. One point for first, 2 for second and so on. Lowest total score wins.

Competing yachts from Adelaide and Kangaroo Island had been training extensively before the event and it was unknown how the Lincoln boat would perform. With light winds on the first day and two races programmed it soon became evident that Ashleigh and Marty were going to be competitive. Adelaide boat Smile sailed by Jane Lane and Laura Groom were the favourites for the title, as they had been winning in Adelaide, but a disqualification in race one for starting too early handed Ashleigh and Marty their first ever State heat win. They backed it up with a strong 3rd in race Two with Smile winning.

Saturday was again light conditions and Scrapatoo sailed well all day to end up with a second, a first and a fourth. Smile again sailed just that little bit better to get two firsts and a second. By now the top four boats were starting to break from the main bunch. Nick Neil and Alex Higgins in Flat Out and the Knoop brothers from Port River Sailing Club along with Smile and Scrapatoo were the only boats still in contention for the state title.

The scene was set for a great last day's sailing. Smile was one point in front of Scrapatoo with their worst race dropped, but Ashleigh and Marty had not placed outside the top four all regatta and smile had been disqualified from race one. Smile could not afford a mistake. After a bad start by both Smile and Scrapatoo they both began to fight their way through the pack. Smile had worked through to first and Scrapatoo to second in a really close race. A wind shift then dropped Scrapatoo back to third with Flat Out up for a second. In the last race Scrapatoo had to beat Smile and hope two other boats could as well to take the title. The two boats had sailed much better than the others and it was hard to see it happen. In what became a race of two Jane was able to just beat Ashleigh in a fantastic last race. Jane and Laura were the new state champions as most had expected. Everybody at the regatta was impressed with how close Ashleigh and Marty came to winning. Having seen the state championships for the last six years I would have to say the standard of sailing continues to improve as the competitors gain more and more coaching at a young age. As the first country competitor Scrapatoo was awarded the State Country Championship and runner up State Champion.

I'm sure that if more boats from Port Lincoln had travelled they would have enjoyed success, as the fleet standard here on Saturday's is still as good as most clubs around the state.