

FINAL NEWS UPDATE – 9 February 2006

Dunstan wins third Hardy Cup in dramatic final

The Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron's Michael Dunstan today won the prestigious Hardy Cup Match Racing Regatta for the third time in four years, a record unsurpassed in Australian sailing.

In a brilliant swansong to this ISAF Grade 3 series for sailors under 25, Dunstan and his crew of Ben Lamb and Andrew Hutchinson fought back in the fifth and final flight to beat fellow Squadron sailor Mark Dorling and his crew of Hugh Tait and Nathan Outerridge, 3-2 on a hot and windy Sydney Harbour.



Hardy Cup Final Team DUNSTAN vs. DORLING

With the 33 degrees northerly wind kicking in at 20-24 knots this afternoon, the final between the two Australians was as much a matter of boat-handling skills as it was tactical match racing, with the two crews sailing the Elliot 6 sports boats under full rigs, including spinnakers.

Both Dunstan and Dorling are outstanding graduates of the host club's youth development program and both have achieved international success in match racing and fleet racing.

While Dunstan is no longer eligible for the Hardy Cup, he finishes with an outstanding record of 2-1-2-1-1 since the RSYS took over conducting the Hardy Cup, a trophy donated by the eminent Australian yachtsman Sir James Hardy to promote match race helming and tactics skills among young sailors.

Sir James' foresight has certainly paid off, with the Hardy Cup enjoying international status and clearly lifting the standards of match racing among young sailors from Australia, New Zealand as well as from Europe and North America.

In the semi-finals, Mark Dorling (RSYS2) scored two straight wins against New Zealander Graeme Sutherland from the Royal Akarana Yacht Club, while Dunstan had a tougher semi-final to win 2-1 against Seve Jarvin (Cruising Yacht Club of Australia).

Dunstan won the first flight against Jarvin but lost the second after the umpires found against him in a port-and-starboard incident as he and Jarvin crossed the finish line. However, in the third and deciding flight, Dunstan's experience gave him the upper hand as the breeze freshened.

Jarvin, however, went on to easily take out the petite final against Sutherland with two straight wins and finish third overall in the Hardy Cup.

With the wind strengthening to 20 knots, the final was always going to be a thriller – and it exceeded expectations!

Dunstan won the first two flights quite comfortably, with some good match racing tactics at the start of each race and then excellent boat handling in the fresh winds and choppy waters of the harbour – which saw both skippers call for a break to bale out their boats.



Team DORLING in the dial up

Then Dorling came back with two fine wins to level 2-all, with race four full of drama.

Firstly Dorling's middleman, Hugh Tait, fell overboard on the second beat to windward, but managed to grab a sheet and haul himself back onto the Elliot 6.

Ahead, Dunstan hit the windward mark, and as he was taking the mandatory penalty turns, Dorling took the lead on the spinnaker run and went to win.

With the north-easter gusting to 24 knots, the final and deciding flight was more about boat-handling and fast sailing than match racing, with Dunstan having a vital edge to win and take the Hardy Cup for the third time.



Team DUNSTAN flying to victory

It was a meritorious win loudly applauded by spectators who included Sir James Hardy, Dunstan's father Jim, a former Commodore of the RSYs, and Farr 40 One Design World Champion Richard Perini with whom Michael Dunstan regularly crews.

"We were high in confidence after our first two wins, but a couple of penalties brought us back to earth in the next two races," Dunstan said back at the RSYs. "However, we were a little faster upward in the final race and that made the difference."

Dunstan's sailing plans for the rest of 2006 include sailing with Richard Perini in the Farr 40 European circuit and defending the World Championship at Newport, Rhode Island, in September, as well as continuing his international campaign with Simon Reiffold in the Olympic Star class.

Chief umpire Shane Borrell from New Zealand headed an excellent panel that faced difficult on-the-water decisions throughout the regatta, which was supported generously by many members of the host club, the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron.

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