

# Dedication to sailing pays off for Evan Walker

14 February 2008

By Peter Campbell

Dedication to improving his sailing skills over the past five years paid a huge dividend for 21-year-old Evan Walker today when he outsailed New Zealander Adam Minoprio to win the 2008 Hardy Cup ISAF Grade 3 Match Racing Regatta on Sydney Harbour.

Walker, now at university studying aeronautical engineering, has travelled down from Lake Macquarie to Sydney almost every weekend for nearly five years to sail with the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia's Youth Sailing Academy.



Evan Walker wins 4<sup>th</sup> and final match by 10 sec over Adam Minoprio

Today he showed all the skills learned over those years when he and fellow CYCA YSA members Will Ryan, Kyle Langford and Oliver Hartas won the final 3-1 after beating another Kiwi, Laurie Jury, in the semi-finals 2-0.

"This is the greatest win of my sailing career," an elated Walker said at the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron after his convincing win, a career that has also included winning the 2007 Australian Open Match Racing Championship and, in 2004, winning the Hobie 16 class at the ISAF World Young Championships.

In recent seasons, his sailing has also seen him being a key crew member on Sydney 38s and Farr 40s in one-design keelboat racing.

Clearly his long experience in sailing Elliott 6 sports boats was an important factor in his Hardy Cup win. "All of us in the crew have been sailing Elliott 6s for years," he added.

A crew of four enabled the CYCA team to sail up to near the maximum weight limit and this certainly helped in the fresh to strong southerly winds of the past two days.

“We had that extra weight on the rail going to windward, plus an extra set of eyes, and downwind we knew we could out-gybe anyone....a factor that helped us considerably in the tight racing in fresh winds,” Walker added,

Walker began sailing with the Toronto Amateur Sailing Club on Lake Macquarie in Flying Ants and 29ers and then got the opportunity to join the YSA at the Cruising Yacht Club in Sydney.

Fresh from his 2-0 win over Jury in the semi-final, the young Australian won the first race matches of the best-of-five final with relative ease against defending Hardy Cup champion Adam Minoprio and his crew of David Swete and Nick Blackman from the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron.

Sailing in a 12-15 knot southerly breeze, the Australians won the first match by 21 seconds, the second by 15 seconds.

In the third race, Minoprio won the start and was ahead at the first windward mark. In a spirited downwind spinnaker gybing duel, Walker incurred a penalty which he was unable to exonerate until near the end of the match, giving a win to the New Zealander.

With the score 2-1, Walker was at his best in the decider, reading the windshifts well and sailing faster upwind to win by 10 seconds and take the Hardy Cup for 2008, 3-1.



Laurie Jury leading Keith Swinton in first match of the petit final

In the petit final Laurie Jury and his crew of Graeme and Logan Sutherland, also from the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron, outsailed the West

Australian crew of Keith Swinton, Nick Davis, Peter Nicholas and James Catts to win 2-0.

In the second match, Swinton, from the South of Perth Yacht Club, sailed around the wrong windward mark after a change of course. Jury followed him until he rounded and set a spinnaker, then quickly headed for the correct mark and an easy win.

This is Jury's final entry in the Hardy Cup as he is approaching 25 years of age. "It's been a great event to sail in, but it is hard coming back to Elliott 6s after match racing in bigger keelboats," the past Cup winner added.

**Hardy Cup final:**

Evan Walker (CYCA, AUS) def Adam Minoprio (RNZYS, NZL) 3-1

**Petit final:**

Laurie Jury (RNZYS, NZL) def Keith Swinton (South of Perth YC, AUS) 2-0

Knock-out for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> places: Torvar Mirsky (RPYC, AUS) def Nicola Souther (RPAYC, AUS)

Knock-out for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> places: Robert Gibbs (RPYC, AUS) def David Chapman (RSYS, AUS)

Knock-out for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> places: Nina Curtis (RPAYC, AUS) def John Bäck (RSYC, SWE)

Event website: <http://www.rsys.com.au/sailing/HardyCup2008.php>

Photos: © Aline Van Haren



Finals sailed in front of spectacular backdrop