

HARDY CUP 2007 – Final News Release

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NZ's Minoprio Hardy Cup Champion for 2007

New Zealander Adam Minoprio today climaxed a great week of sailing on Sydney Harbour by winning the ISAF Grade 3 Hardy Cup, the prestigious under-25 match-racing regatta conducted annually by the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron.

His Black Match team from Auckland's Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron was at the top of leaderboard throughout the four-day regatta, but they needed their best in match-racing tactics, helming and sail-handling to win their semi-final and final today.

The 21-year-old skipper won a close semi-final 2-1 against the RSYS representative Stu Pollard, while the final, against fellow Kiwi Laurie Jury, went to the fourth of the best-of-five races before Minoprio clinched the Hardy Cup 2007, 3-1.

In the petit final, Pollard, 21, scored an impressive 2-1 win against West Australian Torvar Mirsky, who had lost to Jury in their semi-final, 2-0.

Adam Minoprio hopes to join his elder brother Simon in representing New Zealand in the famous Congressional Cup in California in March and then compete in another noted US match-racing event, the Knickerbocker Cup in New York in August.

Adam Minoprio and his crew, David Swete (middle) and Nick Blackman (bow) have been match-racing together for about 18 months, competing in about ten major regattas.

However, this was their first Hardy Cup and the first time for about two years they had competed in the small Elliott 6 sports boat. As first-class sailors, they quickly adapted to the smaller boats and their team-work was clearly a deciding factor in their impressive overall victory.

"I prefer match-race sailing in bigger boats, but the Elliotts are good fun," Adam said today after his victory over the experienced 23-year-old Laurie Jury whose Team Kiwi Match crew also represented the RNZYS.

Explaining his match-racing techniques, Adam said his basic starting rule was to be on the side of the course with the best wind pressure on the first beat to

windward. “We always aimed at that; it’s no use just winning the start and being on the wrong side of the course,” he explained.

“In this regatta we also did very well downwind, coming out on top in some very tight luffing duels – that is a technique we have concentrated on being fast and efficient,” he added.

Today’s semi-finals and final were sailed in 15-18 knot sou’sou’-west winds, with many variations in wind strength and direction, in contrast to the steady moderate to fresh nor’easters of the first three days.

Minoprio won the first match in the best-of-five race final against Jury, putting his crew’s luffing techniques to great use in a downwind duel on the first spinnaker leg. He won the start of the second match to lead all the way and go to a 2-0 margin.

In the third match, Jury forced a penalty against Minoprio in the pre-start manoeuvring and clearly won the start when Minoprio’s boat stalled under the bow of the committee boat, *Gitana*. The score was 2-1.

With the breeze gusting to 20 knots, race four was a nail-biting encounter from before the start as each of the Kiwi teams fought for supremacy at the gun – and the better wind pressure to windward.

They sailed boat-for-boat to the top mark, with Minoprio just leading around, but being penalised by the on-the-water referees for tacking in Jury’s water.

In a highly aggressive luffing and gybing duel, Jury then received a penalty, equalising the position and leaving Minoprio just ahead at the bottom mark.

Jury took the lead upwind and rounded the windmark mark for the final time slightly ahead. However, two attempts by Jury at dummy gybes did not succeed and a lightning fast gybe by the Black Match crew forced the Kiwi Match team into a penalty.



2007 Hardy Cup deciding luffing penalty Photo: Aline Van Haren

Fifty metres further, as they reached back towards the finish line, Jury incurred a second penalty as he tried to sail above Minoprio. And that virtually was the end.

With Jury facing the prospect of having to take two penalties before the finish, he finished without hoisting a spinnaker and Minoprio sailed past to win the fourth match and take the Hardy Cup 2007, 3-1.

It was a well-deserved victory for an outstanding young sailor, with the entire regatta epitomising the concept of Australia's most eminent yachtsman Sir James Hardy in creating this event to foster match-racing between young sailors from Australia and overseas, the latter not only winning the Hardy Cup but also attracting teams from New Zealand, Japan and the USA.

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