



## ROYAL SYDNEY YACHT SQUADRON

**“Read all about it!”**

**The origins and early history of the Squadron – as reported in the Press of the day**

### **Interstate Challenge – 1908**

If you look closely at the Sayonara Cup on display in the Careening Cove, you may notice that the event was not run every year. There were numerous reasons, not the least being two World Wars. In peacetime, there was much disagreement on the rules of the event but the Deed of Gift offered some flexibility. Over the years, there have been many changes. In 1908, an event was scheduled but did not proceed. Read on to find out why.



### **Thursday, 28th March, 1907 – The Sydney Morning Herald**

A CHALLENGE FROM SYDNEY.

SYDNEY. — Mr. A. C. Saxton, vice-commodore of the Prince Alfred Yacht Club, on Wednesday forwarded a challenge to the Royal Yacht Club of Victoria for the Sayonara Cup. Mr. Saxton will be represented by his yacht Awanui. The challenge is for the race to be sailed in January, 1908, under conditions as laid down by Mr. Gollan when he handed over the cup for competition.

### **Friday, 26th April, 1907 – The Sydney Morning Herald**

INTERSTATE YACHT RACE.

SAYONARA TO MEET AWANUI.

MELBOURNE, Thursday

The committee of the Royal Yacht Club of Victoria met to-night to arrange for an answer to the

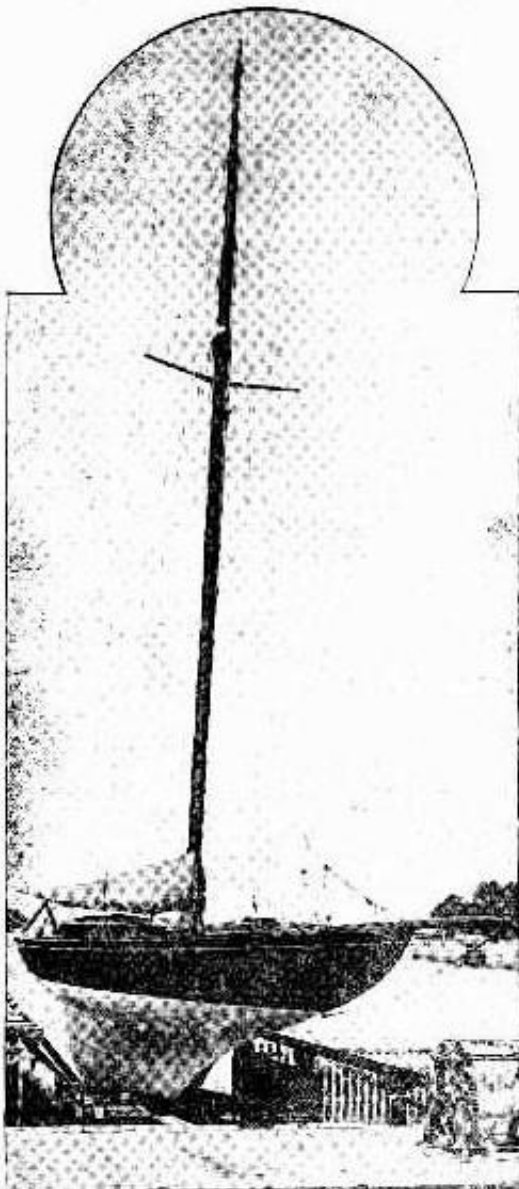


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challenge of the Sydney yacht Awanui for the Syonara Cup. It was reported that there was no likelihood of a new yacht being built this year to defend the cup.

The committee was then faced with the difficulty that they must either arrange for a defender at once or send the cup to Sydney. Messrs. Robb and Newbiggin, owners of the Sayonara, placed the old yacht at the disposal of the club. The committee accepted the offer and have named the Sayonara as defender for Victoria. An answer to the challenge to this effect has been sent to Sydney. The race will probably take place next January in Port Phillip Bay.

### THE AWANUI, A NEW CHACK YACHT.



**Monday, 4th November, 1907 – The Daily Telegraph**

THE SAYONARA CUP.

WILL THE RACE TAKE PLACE?

Since the publication in the columns of "The Daily Telegraph," nearly a fortnight ago, of the intentions of the Royal Yacht Club of Victoria in reference to the impending race for the Sayonara Cup, nothing else has been talked of amongst yachtsmen, and the public, too, is beginning to take active interest in the matter. Although to the present correspondence has been confined to the challenging and defending clubs, the issue is more of an Inter-State nature than the settlement of points between two clubs, and an announcement was made on Saturday evening at the Prince Alfred Yacht Club dinner.

Vice-Commodore A. C. Saxton, in replying to the toast of "The Flag Officers," referred briefly to the cup conditions. The challenging yacht is Mr. Saxton's 10-metre craft Awanui, and the challenge was issued on his behalf by the Prince Alfred Yacht Club in the early part of this year. The Royal Yacht Club of Victoria accepted in due course, and after a fruitless endeavour to form a syndicate to build a new defender, nominated the present holder, Sayonara, to do battle for the southern State.

Correspondence passed between the two clubs relative to the race, when suddenly the Victorians sprang a surprise upon the challenging club, by forwarding their



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reading of the present rules of the British Yacht Racing Association. At the last International Yachting Congress in London a new measurement rule was adopted and boats measured in metres instead of linear feet. Under this measurement a yacht rating 32.6 linear feet would rate as 10 metres, while a craft 39.4 would be designated a 12-metre yacht. The object, of course, was to provide class racing pure and simple, so that no yacht of more than 10 metres could take part in contests of that class. However, no provision was made for time allowances when yachts of different ratings took part in any race, and upon this the Victorians base their claim.

Sayonara comes out in measurement as 12 metres, while Awanui was built as 10, and her owner, when challenging, fully expected that he would be allowed the ordinary rating time under the old rule. The Royal Yacht Club of Victoria has taken the point that "Mr. Saxton's craft and Sayonara should meet on level terms, and they have communicated with the Prince Alfreds to that effect. This on the face of it appears manifestly unfair, and, as Mr. Saxton put it on Saturday evening, "It was of no use putting up a boy to fight a-man," although an interjector caused shrieks of laughter by remarking, "Yes; if he were a very old man." There is no finality yet to the matter, as the executive of the Prince Alfred Yacht Club have not dealt with the letter from Victoria, which was received only on Friday last, though the tenor of it was published nearly a fortnight ago.

The deed of trust certainly provides that the race be held under the Y.R.A. rules, but it also states that any of the conditions may be altered by mutual consent, with one exception, viz., that the challenging yacht shall sail to the locality of the race on her own bottom. Of course, the rules promoting class racing are specially adaptable to the United Kingdom and other centres of yachting, where the white-winged fleets are numbered in thousands, but they surely cannot apply similarly to Australia, for if such be the case all races in Sydney Harbour would be at the mercy of the owners of Awanui and Rawhiti, while Sayonara would scoop the pool in Hobson's Bay.

Sayonara, it may be stated, is the largest racing yacht in Australasia, and in the two previous contests for the cup defeated Bona and Rawhiti after conceding them rating allowances. As Awanui is a much smaller yacht than either of these two, the unfairness of the reading of the rule will be easily recognised. Sydney yachting men are under the impression that Mr. Gollin, when he presented the cup for competition, did not wish the yachts to race under anything but equal conditions.

### **Friday, 22nd November, 1907 – The Australian Star**

NO YACHT RACE

SAYONARA CUP CHALLENGE

PRINCE ALFRED'S WITHDRAW

After many months of negotiating the race between the Sydney yacht Awanui and the Victorian yacht Sayonara has been declared off. The Prince Alfred Yacht Club has decided to withdraw its challenge. When Sayonara won the cup off Sydney Heads from the Bona the races were sailed under the old rules, and in the subsequent races on Hobson's Bay Sayonara was successful in beating Rawhiti under similar conditions - that is the smaller boat got a start according to her rating.



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After Awanui's challenge had been lodged some months, the Victorians sprang a surprise on the Sydney men by declaring that Awanui — a smaller boat — would have to race Sayonara under the new Yacht Racing Association rules, which practically meant that she would have to try and beat Sayonara under equal conditions.

The Sydney yachtsmen protested, but to no purpose. Rather than let the challenge lapse they, asked that the race might be sailed under the old rules — the same as when Sayonara won the cup, and afterwards beat Rawhiti. The Victorians would not listen to this but sheltered themselves under a condition in the deed of gift which provides for the yachts racing on even terms but allows of the committee altering the condition should they so desire. They issued an "ultimatum" to the Prince Alfred Yacht Club and asked for a final reply by the end of November. They have got their reply, and that is that the P.A.Y.C. has withdrawn the challenge. And now the Victorians have a useless bowl on show in the Royal Yacht Club of Victoria, which, without a race for it, is as so much brass. Having won two races under the old conditions the action of the Victorians in suddenly springing the new rules on the Sydney men and that sometime after a challenge had been built is regarded as very unsportsmanlike. The Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron concurs in the action taken by the Prince Alfred.