

**2014 Noelex 25 Nationals – Nelson
Regatta Report by Grant Sutherland T3669 Legato**

Ben Bax, Colin Shanks (Gisborne) and *I* have just returned from the N25 Nats in Nelson, which was sailed in Tasman Bay 14-16 February. The host club was the Tasman Bay Cruising Club and we all enjoyed their warm welcome and great organization and support.

Our race officer was Paul Davies from the Royal Port Nicholson YC who really did an excellent job keeping us all well informed on race operations and amused with his quick-witted tongue. Ben and Colin had met Paul just the week prior at their Javelin Nats and agreed to be Paul's flag courier to Nelson (**Brownie Point Seeking!!**)

14 boats entered the event and the top 5 or 6 boats were consistently faster than the rest.

Our crew had not raced together as a team prior to this regatta, and our campaign had been put together only in the last month or two, although I personally had been working on the boat for some months.

Weather conditions were as expected light to moderate northerly sea breezes that developed from 10:30 onwards, although on odd occasions we were surprised with brisk SW and SE land breezes on days leading up to the regatta. The organizers started the racing each day at 12:30 hrs which was a great decision. Tides were ebbing for all the races, and the current direction was against the sea breeze meaning the downwind leg time component was significant.

In our preparations we knew that the favourites **Visions (Tristan Ornsby)** had a 4 crew strategy (their combined crew weight was about 360kg), and had been very successful in prior regattas. Tristan is a seasoned campaigner who has won several N22 and N25 Nationals dating way back to the early to mid 1990's.

Our strategy was to at least be in touch with these guys upwind and attempt to overhaul them downwind. This actually worked quite well as our combined crew weight was 260kg, and the boat was considerably quicker and able to sail deeper angles downwind to get an inside berth. By adopting a different strategy we had the top 4 boats really thinking hard, and at least taking us seriously! This strategy was based on spring tides ebbing in roughly an upwind direction (SE -> NW).

We were however let down by lack of time on the water as a team, having to shuffle crew roles, and re-think our spinnaker handling, well into the middle of the contest. However we never were conscious of lack of boat speed, the boat was going really well and the lads were enjoying the ride!!

Races 1 & 2 we finished 3rd in both and while the lead boats (**Visions and Flashback** (Richard Hawkins Port Chalmers YC)) weren't too far ahead of us we had to make a few trim changes and really work on aggressive starts. In Race 3 we got a great start and lead from start to finish holding our lead upwind and extending downwind to win by about 35 sec. In Race 4 on Day 1 we got completely buried under a very slow boat at the start and were forced to tack onto a long port tack. The rest of the fleet went left and after about 5 minutes we all got the feeling that things were going our way with a nice consistent breeze and the possibility of getting a right hand shift when we tacked onto the starboard lay line. This is exactly what happened and when the boats came together near the top mark we were clear ahead and to windward and even soaked down aggressively on **Visions** to lead around

Mark 1. To defend our lead we tried a gybe set which got fouled up and the end result was we lost the lead to *Visions* to finish 2nd.

On Day 2 we got the same sea breeze conditions and in Race 5 got a reasonable start and tacked away onto port early on. The breeze went a bit left and when we came back we were in about 5th spot at Mark 1. *Baxy* deployed some pretty aggressive downwind tactics, coupled with going for the correct gate at the bottom (to avoid queues), which saw us up into 3rd after Lap 1. We worked away at the leaders and managed to attack *Visions* at the front of the fleet on the last downwind leg. We were on split gybes and soaking lower and faster and although we thought we may have not quite pipped them we were awarded a 1st equal!!

Race 6 we had an average start middle of the line but again got a little buried by others, *Outnumbered* went well to establish a good lead and we eventually found ourselves in 2nd place which we maintained to the finish.

Race 7 on Day 2 saw us *OCS* due to boats under us and confusion over line calls, we were a sorry last when we finally managed to get back and restart. The crew was focused on pegging back the other players and we managed to get back to 6th place by the end of the race which was a good achievement.

Day 3 dawned and having done our sums overnight we knew we had to beat *Visions* convincingly in both races, and to maintain our lead on *Flashback* we had to really push hard to be in front of them too. This meant a combined fleet / match racing approach for race 8 and a match racing one for race 9.

In Race 8 *Visions* got the pin end and raced away to a convincing win to secure the contest, *Outnumbered* were 2nd and we were 3rd with *Flashback* back in **P6** (a good result for us!!).

For the final race we had calculated that we may still need to beat *Flashback* to hold onto 2nd place and we worked hard to ensure this happened. We found ourselves buried a bit mid-fleet and we swapped places with *Flashback* throughout the race. At the top mark on the final leg of 3 we were closing on *Flashback* but got horribly connected with a desperate mid-fleet player who attempted to tack in our water. We were overlaying initially so to stop those intervening between us and *Flashback* Ben headed straight for the mark, what followed was silly considering the other boat would have comfortably dipped us and still maintained a good position. We came together and I pushed the entangled boats apart, desperate to get back to where we should have been. At the finish we were 5th one place behind *Flashback* to secure 2nd place by **0.5 points!!**

To conclude, the regatta was enjoyed by all competitors and the weather was perfect for the week we were there. I was glad the boat performed well as we hadn't had any 2 boat testing or sailed amongst competitive boats prior to the regatta. Our strategy was the right one and we were only let down by lack of team time in the boat in serious races.

The good news is the **TYPBC** has been asked by the **Noelx 25 Association** if we would like to host the **2015 National Champs in Tauranga**. Its always difficult to get the South Island boats so far north but we will try and there is also the possibility of boosting numbers by chartering boats and getting Auckland owners more involved. **Ben Bax** was certainly beaming from competing in close quarter one design racing, and I'm sure he will try to encourage others in the club to take part too. Please talk to

either Ben or me about putting a campaign together as there are a number of boats that would be suitable close to home!!

At this stage late February looks to be the date, as we have ebb tides late morning and flood tides in the middle of the afternoon. This will allow us to run WL courses offshore on days 1 & 2 and for the final day run say the final 2 or 3 races in the harbour early in the day when we have sufficient water.

Thanks to all those that have helped and supported us!!

Grant Sutherland

Tasman Bay Cruising Club

2014 Noelex 25 National Championship

Series ID: 1
 Races this series: 9 Series completed, maximum of 2 race/s discarded.
 Results based on **Elapsed time.**
 Low Point (ISAF) scoring system, ISAF Rule A9 applies

		Race	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total	Nett	Place
Fleet race, 14 entries														
3675	Noelex 25	Visions	(2)	1	2	1	1=	(4)	2	1	1	15.5	9.5	1
3669	Noelex 25	Legato	3	3	1	2	1=	3	(6)	3	(5)	27.5	16.5	2
3314	Noelex 25	Flashback	1	2	(10)	4	3	2	1	(6)	4	33	17	3
3537	Noelex 25	Outnumbered	4	4	(5)	5	5	1	4	2	(7)	37	25	4
3327	Noelex 25	Elderberry Wine	(7)	5	4	(6)	4	6	3	4	2	41	28	5
3532	Noelex 25	Bandersnatch	5	6	3	3	(7)	5	5	(12)	3	49	30	6
752	Noelex 25	Big Brumus	6	8	7	(11)	(11)	11	8	5	6	73	51	7
672	Noelex 25	Sweet Dream	(10)	7	6	7	6	8	(11)	7	10	72	51	8
3565	Noelex 25	Sheet Music	8	9	9	(10)	8	7	7	8	(11)	77	56	9
1034	Noelex 25	Just in Time	9	(11)	8	9	9	10	9	11	(dnc)	91	65	10
3665	Noelex 25	Cruise Control	(13)	(13)	13	8	12	9	10	10	9	97	71	11
3755	Noelex 25	Kotare Grace	11	12	11	(13)	(14)	12	12	9	13	107	80	12
3447	Noelex 25	Prize	12	10	12	12	10	(14)	13	(14)	12	109	81	13
3745	Noelex 25	Pulse	(14)	(14)	14	14	13	13	14	13	8	117	89	14

