

Well we hit the road last week for Tauranga Matakana Raid... What a weekend!!!!

Article by Zane Blomfield, 16 March 2011

The club set up

The club set up was great, setting up on flat grass, plenty of parking and a great coffee machine all facing the clean waters of the harbour made for a great location to sail from!

Some of the boats had a great Friday night sail, nice breeze, good sailing conditions.

Hearing about the horrific events in Japan on Saturday, and the impending Tsunami in NZ had us all very concerned, but after hearing from authentic sources (gazing out to sea from the beach) we decided it was safe to hit the start line!!

The first leg:

We started with a nice 6kn close hauled leg toward Omokoroa, with a bright array of 7 hobie's, a few tornadoes, F18's, Nacra's, a GBE and another larger cat stomping up the harbour! Once the wind angle shifted and the big guys hoisted kites, we were left in the dust! The wind faded, and it became a tactical game of tide, wind pockets, and looking out for sand banks! It was pretty clear pretty fast who had local knowledge, Winston totally smoked us in his older H16!

A few of us got sucked in by a grunty back Eddie off the point, followed by Richmond and Anna hitting the beach as first H16 in this leg. Congrats! ☺

The second leg:

After a break (beer and meat pie) we lined up for leg 2. We had what I found to be the most fun start ever.... A le mans style start, lining the boats up on waters edge, walking 10 meters back to the grass, and with the 10, 5, 4 and 1 min gun we sprinted down the beach and launched off the beach!! Im sure Malcolm was a Jamaican bob sled racer in a last life as it looked like he had jets on his feet firing us out to sea!!

A short way into the leg we hit glass, not a breath of wind!! We all pulled paddles and turned from sailors to the Matakana paddling team, hot sun, 6 – 12 inches of water with the tide receding we “dug it in” and paddled for about an hour, joined by sting ray's, sharks chasing kawhai and other interesting wild life. Lucky Richmond planned for this and brought an Olympic paddling expert!!

We hit wind, and had a thoroughly pleasant cracked sheet sail to the finish. Speaking of finish, boy that was funky! Starboard tack, pointing hard, doing 8-10kn forwards, while the tide pulled us to windward at 4-5kn was really interesting!! Huge fun, Zane and Malcolm taking first Hobie spot even after doing a 360 that wasn't required, Andrew thought he should take a look past the line before tacking back then crossing, and due to a GPS error, Karl got confused which side of the finish boat to go past! A sail up the narrow estuary to pull our boats up on the grass meters from a lovely camp ground, cold beer, hot pools and friendly people ended the sailing for the day ☺

The stay at Athenree camp ground was one of the most enjoyable weekends this summer! I cant rave enough how pleasant the location was, and how friendly Janine and Mike the managers were. But the thing that really blew us away was the amazing effort and commitment that the Tauranga Yacht club people went to. We felt totally welcomed, cared for and treated like family! The grand meal provided, cooked, and cleaned up after, with fresh steak, sausages complemented with home made salads, herbs from the garden and even a clod beer!!! Wow these guys know how to host an event☺ Followed up with Louise cake and chocolate, what a feed! (we wont mention the rum.....) Great company, great food and drink.

But wait, there's more, waking up to **cooked Bacon, eggs and hash browns!!** Truly amazing ☺

The third leg:

Sadly no wind, so Rob towed us out on a long line for a good hour or so, “carefully” navigating past the channel markers, with the odd very close call!! It was good to spend time close to Daisy and Tutu, who seem very much like a married couple!! LOL We stretched Winston's boat, so now he has an H18 ☺

Finally wind! We cut the cord and started racing, Sean and Tim went for the “Scenic route” again, some stayed close to the island, and the rest took a random zig – zag approach hunting for wind pockets. Fee and Steph showed the boys “girls can do anything” and made awesome time on the Daisy, keeping the pressure on for their best leg and performed well right up there with Karl who rocked in finishing close to Andrew who took out 1st on the last leg.

A very casual prize giving saw Richmond delighted to take home a bottle of rum for first, and Karl taking home a brand new Bodyline wetsuit!!!

Again Tauranga, you guys really made us feel welcome, provided a great venue and race environment, and I know I speak on behalf of us all in saying without hesitation it was a pleasure to meet you all, and we will be back next year with double the numbers!! This is what we all live for. ☺