

Regatta on the Vaal Dam

The 19th Inland Keelboat Week Regatta

VEREENEGING

Ben van Dam 6/10/2003

DENEYSVILLE. - The Deneysville Aquatic Club held it's 19th Inland Keelboat Week Regatta at the Vaal Dam from September 24 - 28 with resounding success.

A total of 52 entrants competed in three fleets i.e. Gold (handicap of .880 and higher - 28 entries), Silver (.879 & lower - 16 entries) and the Cruising Class (8 entries).

The bulk of the entries were from Vaal Dam clubs but sailors like Richard Rath travelled all the way from the Algoa Bay Yacht Club to compete in the event.

Relatively good winds over the first three and a half days allowed the sailors to complete nine races (eight "around the cans" and a medium distance race on Saturday).

The maximum of twelve races could very well have been achieved had it not been for the extreme changes in the wind that made life for the bridge officer and crew extremely difficult. The fact that on occasion the odd marker buoy would go "walkabout" (despite having two weights on each mark) did not help either.

Although racing was extremely competitive and at times very close (3x Stadt23's finishing the 3 hour distance race within 5 seconds of each other with the fourth only 25 seconds behind), racing incidents were kept to a minimum and only three protests/requests

for redress, were received. This is indeed a feather in the cap for all the competitors in the event. It would appear as if NCS & Epton Cup has definitely sharpened the L26 sailors as that class took first and third place in the gold fleet.

On shore things were just as competitive as on the water and in true Keelboat Week tradition the parties with two nights of live entertainment and two nights with a disco, lasted until the early hours of the morning.

The only sad part of the Regatta (if you're a DAC member that is) was the fact that the Lake Deneysville Yacht Club managed to walk off with the interclub challenge trophy, the Admiral's Cup. It must be stressed that it was a dead heat on points at the end, with the last race sailed (the distance race) being used as the tie-breaker. Well, the DAC will just have to try harder next year!

All in all, the DAC had a very successful Regatta and this is supported sailors' comment such as "the best Keelboat Week I have attended in many years". Abbreviated results:

Skipper Ewald Sternagel and his crew were first in the Gold Fleet, with Phillip Baum and crew second, and Herbie Karolius and crew third. Keith Vennel and his crew ended first in the Silver Fleet, with Randolph Verhey in second and Mike Robinson in third.

In the Cruising Fleet Jan Laubsher was first, Daniel Coetzee second and Gavin Pawson third.

Right: More than 50 yachts participated in this year's Keelboat Week Regatta, held at the Deneysville Aquatic Club on the Vaal Dam recently. More photos on tc@nauticalimages.co.za

