

Dodds and Arnold retain Hobie title

BLAINE DODDS and Steve Arnold retained their national Hobie sailing championship at Fish Hoek Beach at the weekend.

The pair claimed their fifth consecutive title, pipping world champions Shaun Ferry and Alison Lewis in the penultimate day's races.

After Dodds had taken the aggregate lead on Friday, he sailed close to Ferry in the only race of an almost windless Saturday morning, knowing that second place would be good enough to secure overall victory.

Ferry raced superbly, saying he was "thinking right" tactically, to finish first, but Dodds and Arnold followed them over the line to keep the SA championship.

Dodds put their victory down to consistency, as they rarely finished

outside the top four. As one of the teams selected to compete for the world title at La Rochelle in July, a title they have never won in spite of several second place finishes, they are confident they will "pull something out of the bag" this time around.

For Ferry and Lewis, it was still a successful week as for them it was primarily a trial run and a re-adjustment to Hobie 16s after racing 50-foot yachts recently. They were hoping for third or fourth spot as they did not want the added pressure of national champions when they compete in La Rochelle.

With the chairman of the organising committee Aubrey Price admitting he was "a little disappointed" with the regatta as regards the trying conditions — only 14 of the 36

races planned were held — the question was raised as to why the regatta was held in Fish Hoek at this unpredictable time of the year.

"We like to hold it at the unofficial end of the season, or else the rest of the season will fall flat," Price explained, although he added that a change of dates was still a possibility. Besides the wind, the regatta was successful with 102 boats competing. Price was pleased, but not surprised that "the top guys shone through" and was confident that this "very strong" team would bring back the title from La Rochelle.

The full team list for the world titles is: B Dodd and S Arnold, S Ferry and A Lewis, D and J Kruyt, A Lawrence and A Orton, C and T Whitehead, W and L Edwards.

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