



The 2005 Glascraft Neil Pryde Lake George Marathon + Speed Challenge was a big success. The weekend saw 18 competitors battle it out on the speed strip and slalom course against each other and the clock, to determine the fastest sailors (and those capable of counting laps).

Saturday saw blue skies and 20 knots greet the competitors at the 12 o'clock registration and briefing. By group consensus, it was decided to set up the speed course on the first day, as the wind was good and everyone was keen. Nick Bellgrove and myself took the boat out and established the course, then sat out the following hour watching everyone race toward the boat in an effort to set the fastest speed. All sailors were safe and stayed a sensible distance from the boat and anchor rope. At the end of the hour, we took the boat ashore for a crew change then it returned to the water for another session and Nick and I were able to sail. After a few runs, it was decided to move the speed course to the 'spit' as the north westerly wind was setting up a nice bear away of around 150m to the boat then a nice flat water gybe at the end. The speeds here increased immediately, from the mid to high 40's (km/h) to mid to high 50's.

At the end of Saturday's speed sailing, Tim Hemer, Dave Mossop and myself were all on 59km/h, with other sailors following closely – only 2-3km/h behind.

Half the competitors camped the night out on the spit, and eventually made their way from the campfire back to their swags and tents by 2.30 am.

Sunday was an equally enjoyable day, with blue skies and another 20 knots from the north west. The race briefing was held at 11 am, and it was decided to hold a slalom marathon around a 2km course with a beach start and finish. All 18 competitors lined up in waist deep water waiting for the beach towel to drop. Everyone raced down wind (fully powered) to the first buoy, and as is always the way at the first mark, some made it round – some didn't. Once around, it was Nick Bellgrove, Scott Chamberlain, Bob Friend and myself all racing for the lead, and by the next buoy, I'd managed to get in front. I was able to hold this lead for the following few laps, then the question was it 4 or 5 laps that we were meant to sail? This is the problem when you're in front. You need to pay attention at the race briefing. So the dilemma was, do I sail 4 and return to the finish line with the risk of not completing the course, or do I sail 5, hoping that everyone else will follow? I decided on 5 laps but went on to make the mistake of not turning around to see if the others had followed me. I sailed 2km's to the next buoy, gybed, then saw in the distance the fleet sailing hard upwind back to the finish line.....bugger!! Bob Friend enjoyed the benefits of paying attention at the briefing to finish in first place, followed by Scott Chamberlain and Nick Bellgrove.

At the completion of the marathon, we opened the speed course again at the spit, and sailed it in a solid 20 knots for the next 2-3 hours. All competitors sailed very well – not crowding the boat, and allowing enough space between each other for safety and clean air. At the end of Sunday's speed session, it was Andreas Nehls and myself with speeds of 61km/h. We closed the racing, and held the presentations where the generous prizes of a Neil Pryde Boom, Navman GPS and multiple sets of Neil Pryde harness lines, were raffled to reward participation to the competitors.

Thank you to all competitors for their support of this event, and to Glascraft for their generous ongoing sponsorship of the event. Thanks also to Nick Bellgrove for the use of his boat (a must for this sort of competition), and finally to Ruth Clarke and Tim Hemer's sister (sorry name escapes me?) for their generous assistance in the boat and observing the marathon and recording results.

Sunday was our back up day for competition. Whilst there was no competition, a few of us sailed.....for about an hour.....we had no strength!!

I intend to continue to organise this event again next October long weekend and hope that attendance and competitor numbers will continue to grow. It seems to be a reliable time of year for wind, and with 18 competitors this year, and around 15 last year, I reckon it's a big success – especially when it's the only form of organised racing around at the moment in SA. If anyone would like to step up and organise their own event, I'd be more than happy to help them out – it's not hard, and it's a heck of a lot of fun. We just need 3 or 4 organised events each year, and it'd be great. Also, please let me know if you'd be interested in returning to Lake George in early January for a similar event to this one – I'm thinking of it!

Event Results

Speed Saturday

(all runs – not in order)

Tim Hemer 48,48,47,50,30,45,46,48,53,55,59,56
Ben Treadwell 37,27,33
Ross Treadwell 39,43,43,45,45,42,45,42,45
Jeff Clarke 42,51,53,48,47,44,50,52,50,47,51,50,54
Shane Biggins 44,46,45,45,45,48,47,52,50,49,47,45
Adam Cottam 43
Norm Clarke 49,44,47,43,48,49,45,43,48,43
Chris Reiffel 43,49,51
Andreas Nehls 47,52,53,51,55,53,53
Nick Bellgrove 51,48,50,47,52,54,56,55,56,55
Geoff Shuttleworth 43,42,38,43,45,47,46,50,42
Chris Dimond 57,54,48,55,53,57,56,58,54,57,59,52
Bob Friend 49,49,48,52,40,48,47,51
Scott Chamberlain 50,49,50
John Berryman 46,51,54,50
Dave Mossop 45,49,47,44,52,55,54,55,59,56
Antony Blazewicz 46,48,49,48,46,49,50

Speed Sunday

(all runs – not in order)

Tim Hemer 52,55,56,58,55
Jeff Clarke 49,53,52,52,47
Shane Biggins 48
Adam Cottam 51,49,53
Norm Clarke 49,53,48,49,52,52,53
Andreas Nehls 58,58,61,58
Geoff Shuttleworth 47,51,47,48,51,51,53,52,52
Chris Dimond 59,57,54,57,57,59,57,58,61,61,58
Bob Friend 51,56,54,50
Scott Chamberlain 51,57,58,57,57,57,54,54,55
John Berryman 55,55,54
Dave Mossop 57,56,54,57,54,49,57,50,52,53,58,58
Steve Schuurmans 50,53,49,50,49,54,55,54,52
Ross Treadwell 46,47,44,46,45
Darren Zub 47,50

Speed Overall Results

Saturday

Tim Hemer 59km/h
Dave Mossop 59km/h
Chris Dimond 59km/h

Sunday

Andreas Nehls 61km/h
Chris Dimond 61km/h

Slalom Marathon

1 - Bob Friend
2 - Scott Chamberlain
3 - Nick Bellgrove
4 – Tim Hemer
5 – Chris Dimond
6 - Jeff Clarke
7 – Norm Clarke
8 – Geoff Shuttleworth
9 – David Mossop
10 – Ross Treadwell
11 – John Berryman
12 – Shane Biggins
13 – Ben Treadwell
14 – Chris Reiffel
15 – Adam Cottam
16 – Andreas Nehls
17 – Antony Blazewicz