

Hi everyone,

Firstly Happy New Year to everyone! I hope you all have kept to your New Years resolutions so far.

So it has been a while since my last update. On returning to Australia I was straight back into my uni work. Fortunately I have passed this semester which is a relief.

Sailing now has Tier 1 status at the VIS which unlike in the past means we have a sailing program run by the Victorian High Performance Coach (Johnny Rogers). This gives us Sailors many great opportunities to better our physical and mental preparation for sailing, whilst also giving us support networks to help us with our careers and/or education.

The World Rankings which came out after the Worlds left us ranked 30<sup>th</sup> in the world. Since then another rankings list came out with us ranked 21<sup>st</sup>. We are very happy to be moving up the rankings list so fast.

On the sailing side of things, Will and I had a little break before getting back into training for the summer season. The Sail Down Under series kicked off in Brisbane at the end of November. Unfortunately we missed the first day of racing due to me being in Melbourne sitting my last exam. The last day brought strong winds and a tough sea state to contend with. We didn't adapt to the conditions well at all capsizing several times. Each capsize the top of our rig would get stuck in the mud at the bottom of Morton Bay. This meant before righting we needed to clean the "choc top" from the top of our rig to remove any evidence of the incident happening. By the end of the day we were experts at cleaning off the "choc top". The worst part of the day was knowing that Will's younger sisters, in the 420, beat us around the track. They were never going to let him forget this day. Although we missed the first day and with a few hiccups on the last, we still managed to finish the regatta in the lead to take out the first event of the Sail Down Under series.

We were then off to Sail Sydney with a stop off at the so called "God's Country" or as the rest of us know it Lake Macquarie. Will and his family have a house there and he continuously rants about how amazing it is. We drove for 10 hours down the coast on a beautiful summer's day and as we approach the lake, dark clouds come over to hide the sun and rain pours down for the 36 hours we are there! God obviously wasn't in a good mood that day!

We were then down to Sydney for the regatta. It is always interesting dealing with the insane number of yachts, motor boats, ferrys, ships, and out of control 18ft skiffs that always make their way through the middle of your course on the Harbour. With a much larger and more competitive fleet it was going to be a great regatta. We were confident in our speed going into the regatta and came away with a 2<sup>nd</sup> which we were very happy with!

It was then time to head home, to Sandringham Yacht Club for Sail Melbourne. We were sailing a different boat for the regatta which meant endless hours of boat work to get everything set up the way we liked it. We only managed one hour in the boat before the regatta which was not ideal and never really felt like we had everything right. We were aiming to finish 2<sup>nd</sup> to Matt and Mal which would involve beating the Americans, Stu McNay and Graham Biehl. They have a much better ranking than us but we have beaten them in a few regattas. We ended up finishing the regatta in 3<sup>rd</sup> place which is not what we were aiming for, but still a good result.

We are very lucky at Sandringham to have such a great world class facility to run Sail Melbourne The event attracts top sailors from all over the globe, and I am very lucky to have such an event at my home Yacht Club.

Post Sail Melbourne we had two weeks break over Christmas and New Year before we were off to Sorrento for our National Championships. I took this opportunity to work at Whitworths (I don't get to work much at any other time of the year and often wonder why they let me come in from time to time). I also tried going shopping on Boxing Day to get some sweet deals. I think I went to Southland three times on Boxing Day and all I managed to buy myself was a Frozen Coke. I'm quite a terrible shopper which my mum tells me is a good thing!

We were down in Sorrento on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January to get in some training before the nationals started a couple of days later. Sorrento is quite a difficult place to sail and the Nationals were always going to be an interesting regatta. The training we did before the event proved this to be correct and gave us a chance to be prepared for a tough regatta.

We finished the regatta comfortably in 2<sup>nd</sup> place behind Matt and Mal which is all we could aim for realistically. We didn't manage to beat Matt and Mal in a single race all summer which was a bit disappointing but all in all it was a successful

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summer of sailing. We competed in 4 events and spent a lot of time on the water. I didn't mention this before but we managed to win the Sail Down Under series in the 470's which is an achievement we are very proud of.

In the lead up to Sail Melbourne I managed attract a fair bit of media attention. I have been in newspapers on the odd occasion before but I was in them several weeks in a row. My ugly mug actually managed to make the cover of the Melbourne Weekly newspaper which was a new experience. I'm slightly embarrassed by it all but it is pretty cool having friends and family see me in the paper.

This year I am attempting to go back to go back to studying Full Time which is going to be a challenge as I now must get into finishing my Engineering subjects which can require a lot more than the Commerce subjects I completed last year. Our plans for sailing are to do two trips. Our first trip in March/April to compete in two World Cup events located in Spain and France. And our second for two and a half months from June till September to compete in two more World Cup events in Germany and England, and our World Championships in Holland.

2010 looks like it's going to be a big year for me and hopefully a successful one too!

Thank you again for all your support.

Till next time,

Sam Kivell



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