

2007 North Island Optimist Champs- Lake Rotorua.

29 Kohi sailors and their parents descended on Rotorua Yacht Club on Saturday morning looking forward to a beautiful day of racing out on the not so beautiful Lake Rotorua. After everyone was rigged Riley and Sarah gave a descriptive briefing on what they wanted the sailors to work on out on the water. The sailors headed out in 5 knots of breeze. Gerald, the race officer, with diet coke in hand, managed to get one race under way, although with the wind only at the pin end it took some sailors over 4 minutes to cross the start line and the race into a bit of a lottery. After that, the breeze decided to drop out completely. Eventually the sailors were sent ashore for a break. Soon after the wind filled in from the north and we were heading back out onto the course. The breeze was hard to pick with the wind bending around the island. After two more races were completed, Riley and I (Sam) were getting annoyed because their game of rugby was getting delayed. After the first day Andrew McKenzie had one top race with a 2nd and William Linkhorn placed 8th but was unfortunately Z flagged.

That night everyone returned to the Cedarwood Motel to have the annual Kohi Opti North Islands BBQ. Everyone enjoyed themselves despite the disappointing loss to the Silver Ferns. All the kids had fun in the pool and spa pool and playing a game of soccer and the adults enjoyed some much needed socialising.

The next morning was light...again. After another detailed briefing from Riley we all headed out despite the dropping Northerly for a 9.30 start. Around midday the wind finally filled in and Gerald got the open fleet underway. Everyone was making sure that Eliza Wilkinson was sailing well because if she got a race in the top 20 everyone would be getting Subway. Luckily she did, with an outstanding race ending up in 15th. In the following race William Phipps was placed a fantastic 13th. Andrew McKenzie looked great rounding the top mark of the last race in 1st place, as Riley and I were chomping away on our Subway. But unfortunately Andrew slipped a few places on the next two legs in the minefield like conditions ending up 10th. With his 7th and 4th earlier in the day Andrew was placed 4th overall for the championship and first 12 year old. Unfortunately William Linkhorn didn't have such a great day but still finished in a very respectable 23rd position and 3rd twelve year old. The 3rd Kohi sailor was George Anyon placed 30th. Marshall von Keisenberg placed 43rd and Eliza Wilkinson 46th. George's brother Harrison placed 69th overall was the top 10 year old sailor in the regatta. Well done Harrison!

Meanwhile in the green fleet there were some amazing results and moments of brilliance by Alex Wotton 5th overall, Harry Mander 7th, Emma McKenzie 15th and William McKenzie 20th, all of them getting several races in the top 5.

Overall it was a fabulous weekend although everyone agreed we could have done with a little bit more wind. Many sailors are showing very promising signs for the up-coming Optimist Nationals at Easter in Lyttleton.

Special thanks to coaches, Sarah Bilkey and Riley Dean.

By Sam McKenzie