

STAR Lake Express 18 July 09

RESULTS



Few could have predicted just how bad the weather was to become as the week continued, and ultimately early Saturday morning organisers had to re-evaluate their ability to run an event by where safety could be upheld and participants would have a rewarding experience from the promises of fun I had made to them.

As I watched our mens crew attempt to load our waka on the pontoon and the difficulty they had with this process, immediately I knew I could not host this event from this venue. With volunteers on edge and participants arriving I bravely uttered we're relocating to the other side of the lake where no white caps were to be seen.

Within an hour we had relocated 5 canoes, a safety-boat, hired a hall, pitched a tent, changed the race programme, determined a new race course and set up camp at the Northshore Canoe Club. It's amazing how many mountains you can move with the support of a great team.

Our new course no longer resembled a star but it kept us away from the northern shores of the lake where white caps frolicked with winds.



As the hour for the start drew near the weather grew more favourable, and our day began as planned with a karakia kindly given by Tamaki Healthcare kaumatua Heta Tobin to bless and ensure safety to everyone competing on the day.

Race 1:

First race began at the scheduled 10.00am start. The 5 teams that lined up saw 4 ladies crews and our hallow crew seen here carrying our Kaumatua in seat 3, to pave safety along the race course.



There were team names of Minties and Splashes, there were ladies in Pink & Ladies who were OK while others were On Fire.

All canoes were held to ensure a fair start, the GO was called and off charged the ladies crews with Team Splashes from Te Paerangi leading to the first buoy, but youth and fitness commanded by where the navy girls, 'Minties' made their move only to guide the rest of the pack for the remainder of the course. As I saw the canoes approach the second buoy in what seemed record time due to a helpful south easterly, I got on to my cell phone notified the safetyboat, the course is too short we're lengthening it, tell the teams we've put in a 4th buoy send them to Carmel College. I was confident as long as they told the lead canoe and if everyone followed them we'd be okay.

Picture seen here of RNZ Navy team 'Minties' chartering their path to success.



As the crews turned buoy 3, I was rather hesitant as the navy girls, Splashes & our Pink

ladies were close to shore as if they were paddling the home straight, we began to wave our arms, keep going, keep going directing canoes to continue to Carmel College. I couldn't bear to look as winning faces turned to grimaces knowing they had an extra 1000m of paddling to do.

This new deviation of teams proved fruitful for the 'OK Girls' who had taken a wide line, as teams detoured back out to the extended course this was directly the line the OK Girls were taking, and they stealthily sneaked past the ladies in pink to pip them by one second at the post.

Final honours go to team Minties our navy girls and surprisingly teams finished in order of seniority. ie 1st team accumulated age of approx 125 yrs and 5th team accumulated age of approx 210 yrs.

RACE1	Organisation	Time	Placing
Minties	RNZN	24.25	1
Splashes	Te Paerangi	25.51	2
OK Ladies	Touch Rugby Girls	26.39	3
Busting With Life	Busting With Life DB Team	26.4	4
Tamaki on Fire	Tamaki Healthcare	27.1	5



Race 2:

Now that everyone had witnessed the first race there were no more hidden surprises, let the races begin. Our brightest team of the day Team OOPS from Otahuhu Primary School seen here were in this heat, alongside some big burly men from Henderson Rentals and a guile looking team from BECA and finally not to be outclassed



by their female counterparts a second Navy team representing the whanau from Te Taua Moana Marae.

Race began with a flurry of testosterone with 4 teams all in pursuit of the first buoy, the added male hormone created a reluctance of steerers wanting to give way at the first buoy, unofficially but rumour has it Maki Raukete steerer of Henderson Rentals jack knifed everyone at the first buoy. The only female steerer in the heat from the Navy called reverse to her team and they paddled away to buoy 2 leaving a carnage of destruction behind.

The men after much heaving and hoing regathered and reeled back in the navy team, this time everyone taking a more heedful approach into buoy 2, ensuring no further ground was lost. A close challenge was seen between team OOPS and Henderson Rentals with steerer Ben Finau multitasking as steerer, caller, Instructor come outboard motor.



A great evenly spread result in this heat with only 39 seconds separating the four teams and Henderson Rentals being 3rd fastest team of the day with the next 3 teams following sequentially overall.

RACE 2	Organisation	Time	Placing
Henderson Rentals	Henderson Rentals	22.18	1
Team OOPS	Otahuhu Primary School	22.27	2
Whetu Moana	RNZN – Te Taua Moana	22.39	3
BECA	BECA	22.57	4



Photo of Race 2 Participants

Race 3:

The final race of the day was considered to be the showdown of the regatta, with all 4 teams having been training together over the past two Sundays. There were the experienced dragon boaters versus the fit athletic gorgeous PT Instructors from Les Mills Takapuna.

Pre-race strategies were taking place, teams were bribing the better steerers, paddles were more selective in paddle choice and on the start waka were edging ahead trying to get a start-line advantage, as you do!! The race began with more water in the air and in the waka then on the blade as one would expect with a bunch of beginners all action and no finesse. Nonetheless bragging rights were at stake therefore friendships remained on the banks and a battle was to

take place on the water, but more importantly Maori TV were filming so an image was to be preserved. To be expected RIPPT aka Les Mills can be seen here approaching buoy 1 first.



Meanwhile TV3 Water Dogs, Water Buffalos and the Auckland City Council teams were battling between each other making paddlers feel intimidated by the closeness of opposing teams. Everything learnt at training went out the window, as steerers call 'turn' heads pivot as if to say what foreign language are you speaking. A barrage of instructions then proceeded, paddles began drawing, composure was starting to settle in and the race continued. Oblivious to any foray our leaders RIPPT paddled ahead and seen below the TV3 Water Dogs were surfing the eastern shores in hot pursuit.



Meanwhile Auckland City Council and the TV3 Water Buffalo were neck and neck and the most challenging part of the course was approaching, turning of Buoy 2. The turning manoeuvre would leave the ama (outrigger) exposed to the wind therefore in a more vulnerable position to

flip, and Auckland City Council pictured below know only too well how disastrous that can be when they went for an involuntary capsizing a week earlier, could this be de ja vu? I am happy to say not a man or woman went swimming this day.



Final glory went to the tenacious determination of team RIPPT from Les Mills their never die attitude saw them take the fastest time of the day. Coming in second place and with the second fastest time of the day was the unrelenting TV3 Water Dogs finishing in true doggedly style. Auckland City Council and TV3 Water Buffalo's seen below wrapped up the day finishing in true champion style.



RACE 3	Organisation	Time	Placing
RIPPT	Les Mills Takapuna	20.43	1
TV3 Water Dogs	TV3/Cavalier Bremworth	22.11	2
Auckland City Council	Auckland City Council	23.08	3
TV3 Water Buffalo	TV3/Cavalier Bremworth	24.17	4

The day closed with a small certificate presentation and a sharing of race stories. Thank you to all the participants that supported our event. Many thanks to the Taniwha women, men and partners that volunteered, coordinating the many tasks that enabled the day to be a success.

We are very grateful to the RNZ Navy for providing us with the safety boat and driver to ensure there was safety on the water at all times.



To view more photos click link below

<http://picasaweb.google.com/sugartp/StarlakeRegatta#slideshow/5360673206927822850>