



May 2012

Newsletter of the Auckland Blokart Club

President's Post



ABC's Mission: To provide a friendly, well organised, and safe environment for all blokart activities

Track improvements at our Ardmore Airport venue have taken far longer and been more complicated than envisaged. Thank you Members for your patience. The end result will be well worth the wait.

In addition to the issues faced in getting a solid surface, we have had car clubs using the runway area with occasional spills onto the new surface which churned it up and required the contractor to smooth it down again. Special thanks to Russell Harray for countless hours overseeing the project.

It was really pleasing that 22 ABC members went to the 2012 Blokart World Championships at Ivanpah Dry Lake in USA in April, and even more so that Sarah Tootill took first place in performance lightweight and Wayne Osborne in Performance super heavyweights. Haydn Ingall placed third in performance middleweight, and it was an ABC clean sweep in the performance super heavyweights with Wayne Osborne first, Theo Vondervoort second, and Paul Beckett third. Congratulations to all.

Ross Vickers was a driving force behind the North American and Worlds Championships events and his commitment was recognised at Ivanpah by being awarded Honorary Life Membership of the North American Blokart Sailing Association. Congratulations Ross, the events would not have been as successful without your knowledge and input.

Prize-giving for the summer twilight series was held at Westwind Theatre in Avondale on 4th May. There was a huge roast meal and a great ABC team spirit throughout the night. Don't miss the mid-winter social gathering on 21st June.

The AGM is coming up in July. Please think about enhancements to the structure or activities of the club and either raise them in general business or discuss with me before the meeting. The AGM is your chance to have a say in the club's future. We are always keen to have new committee members who bring fresh ideas. While it's busy, the work is shared and it's not too overwhelming. If you are interested please discuss with Rowena or me.

Wherever your wind blows.

Graham



Jenny Hales, The Great Race (50 km)

Subscriptions

Subscriptions for the 2012/13 year were due for payment on 1st April. Please sift through your emails for your renewal notice and please pay promptly. The renewal process enables the club to update it's membership records and this year we have asked you to provide a little more information than in past years, particularly regarding the names of family members.

World Championships (part 1)

By Graham Ingall

My first sight of Ivanpah Dry Lake was from the car after 235 miles' drive on the I15 from Los Angeles, swooping down from the mountains on a ten mile long straight with an enormous piece of brown, hard, shimmering lake surface to the right. In the heat haze we could make out the blokart tent village across the lake, and in the far distance a bizarre array of gaudy buildings, a monorail, and a roller coaster plonked in the middle of the desert. Yep, that was home for the next ten days.

Race HQ was just 2 miles along a dusty track from the hotel, and the New Zealand gear tent was set up right alongside the lake. My first practice day started at 5 knots but was blowing 25 knots within an hour, and later to 35 with dust everywhere. Terrific fun and I set my fastest speed for the week at 85.3 kph (others were into the mid 90 kph zone).



Barry Cole

The experience of sailing on such a vast area is simply awesome. When racing, I had huge difficulty seeing the marks, and when the course changed, I sometimes lost my sense of direction after rounding the top mark. Luckily I wasn't often troubled by leading races and had somebody to follow. Knowing which direction to tack from the start, and how far you went, and not getting psyched by what others were doing were key to gaining or losing places. At Ardmore we can tack 42 metres across the runway. At Ivanpah you can go about a mile either side of the straight line to the mark.

Among many highlights was having a free sail to about 5 miles up the lake from Race HQ and screaming back down wind hovering around 80 kph the whole way. Another was after the last day's racing when Haydn and I sailed back to the hotel. There were a few hairy moments like hitting a formed track across the

lake with boulders about 10 cm diameter strewn all over and having to weave around them at 70 kph; passing competitors' cars once we reached the road out (including a Porsche 911 with a blokart on the roof rack!); wondering with equal amounts of angst how tall the mast was and how low the power lines were; realising we were committed at 60 kph to a narrow chute where the dirt road intersected with the hotel perimeter road, hoping no cars were coming, then sailing straight through the stop sign and around the shopping complex to our carpark. Oh yeah, that was fun. I'll be back.

World Championships (part 2)

By David Helbron

What a venue and what great wind. I arrived in Ivanpah on 31 March with Sonja, Taryn and Natalya. Expensive, though meant I had no problems shipping blokart and lots of sails and mast pieces etc.. Had been warned about outlet mall adjoining Primm. Girls took an instant liking to exploring it while I went out to the playa to learn about upwind/downwind sailing in wide open spaces.

Over the next 2 days most of the NZ team arrived. Good wind with huge speeds being set, though also huge dust storms. Sometimes sailing at 80 km/hr plus with almost 0 visibility, trying to find our test course marks and also avoid any other karts. My record speed while sailing course during worlds racing is now 86.4 km/hr.

Discovered that American food and portion sizes do not suit the average Kiwi. Trevor on arrival ordered a child's size turkey sandwich. We were all totally amazed that the whole turkey appeared to be there between 2 slices of bread. He struggled through half. We learnt early on that most breakfasts or dinners could be shared between 2 and still neither would go hungry. Also discovered an excellent Japanese restaurant in the outlet mall (more to our taste and healthier). Then the North American Champs. In this I achieved a 6th overall in the performance lightweights which led me to believe that I might be able to be competitive in the worlds.

A lay day before Worlds during which time went to start exploring Vegas. A unique place with every casino having a theme and trying to outdo each other to attract the punters. The girls also discovered outlet malls there. Must say even though I usually don't do much shopping, I was getting into this now as well. Lee jeans from \$12 and Skechers/Reebok/Nike/Merrill shoes from \$30/pair. Before rumours start, yes, we did end up with 26 new pairs of shoes and I was probably the most guilty. Set for life or 'til I next return to Ivanpah. Then the World Champs. Very close racing in the lightweight division with Sarah taking out the overall win, Gabe in second, Jan from Holland in 3rd and only 3 points behind was me. One very happy sailor as went with hopes of ending up in top 10. To sum up, Ivanpah is a fantastic venue and if any of the club members who did not attend have a chance to sail there in the future I highly recommend it. Can be combined easily if time allows with a holiday to visit, Grand Canyon, Zion National Park, Vegas, Messa Verde, Disneyland, Universal Studios and the list goes on...



Really hot plus dusty

Results (for top ABC participants)

Performance Lightweights:
1st Sarah Tootall, 4th David H

Performance Middleweights:
3rd Haydn Ingall

Performance Heavy Weights:
5th Russell Hurray

Performance Super Heavies:
1st Wayne Osborne, 2nd Theo Vondervoort, 3rd Paul Beckett

Team Event: 3rd Russell, Wayne & Barry Cole



World Championships (part 3)

By Russell Harray

Two's company, three's a crowd, but seven was fantastic!

After many months of planning, discussion, paying out deposits, 7 ABC members met at Auckland Airport, 31 March, heading for the World Blokart Champs at Ivanpah dry lake. Out of the 7, Wayne, Barry, Bruce, Jenny and myself were competing, therefore 5 blokarts and associated gear. Julie and Marg were along as the chief support team and relaxed tourists. A month of weighing gear, trial packing, re weighing everything many times as stuff was added and then discarded meant everyone was on maximum weight limits. We all had Koru membership, therefore allowing extra luggage, plus wore our heavy clothes and carried on 7 kg of extras plus cameras, laptops etc. Everyone ended up paying a bit extra to get those extra bags on. We were travelling 10 days before the main event so we could get in some practice on the dry lake plus sail the NA Champs as a warm up, this necessitating extra sails, tyres and sailing gear.

Once at the Koru lounge, luggage safely? checked in, everyone relaxed, the jokes starting to flow, and plenty of food and drinks consumed before the 12 ½ hour flight to LA. It was 12 ½ LONG hours as the plane was full, therefore no upgrades, and everyone was happy to arrive and get out to stretch the legs and get some fresh air, well, fresh LA smog. We were met by Jim Tolan, our US friend from previous events, who with Paul Beckett (he was staying with Jim) transported all our gear to Cruise America where we picked up an RV. The 7 of us took a minicab, getting a bit lost, but finally arriving with

the mountain of gear. It took over an hour to sign all the papers, go through a safety briefing on the RV, pack everything and hit the highway for the 5 hour drive to Primm, our Hotel for the next 2 weeks. The RV was great, the luggage packed in easily, it was easy to drive, lots of power with a V10 motor, and plenty of room for the 7 of us. Ten minutes down the highway we realised Cruise America hadn't filled the RV up with petrol, therefore we had to



programme in the gps to find a petrol station. No problem, and \$200 later we were on the way again after also picking up something to eat.

The petrol price is about 40% of NZ so this was cheap travelling for us. Stopped at Barstow to do a supermarket shop (Vonns) to cover the next few days as there is limited food shopping at Primm, although plenty of outlet shopping as the girls soon discovered. We arrived about 8 pm, 20 hours after first meeting at the airport. It was great to finally be there, get a room and sleep properly. Everyone had got in some snoozing on the trip but mostly the group was in need of a solid rest.

Primm Valley Resort is one of 3 casinos at Primm, servicing the LA crowd who travel to Nevada most weekends to gamble. It is right on the California/Nevada border and about 40 km from Las Vegas. It was cheap and

convenient to the racing, 10 minutes away, but inside was quite dim, noisy and smoky, as a lot of casinos are.

Day 2 was spent putting blokarts together, Marg and Julie rearranged everyone's accommodation so we were all located in the same block, and we sailed for the first time. 20-25 knts all day, so 6 hours of great sailing. The next day was the same with a bit more wind, everyone on 2 metre sails and Barry, Wayne and myself had our first taste of 90+ km/hr. I'm sure Bruce was right up there as well but he had no working gps. We started to discover what it's like on wide open spaces, worked out the rough bits and found that a gps stops working over the bumps, leading to us all taping our batteries so they couldn't vibrate around. We also discovered the dust. After two days everything was dirty; blokarts, sails, mast pieces (where you couldn't tell whether they were carbon or fibreglass), our clothes and the inside of the RV. We also found that having the RV was one of our better decisions. Being able to get out of the sun, dust, and wind for a break or debrief was a necessity. We had a fridge and plenty of storage and during the event often had visitors who needed a break from being outside. Air conditioning on the hot days meant comfort.

While everyone else was practicing Julie and Marg met up with Sonja, Natalya and Taryn and headed for Vegas discovering the best places to shop and sightsee. As others arrived more of the girls joined this group. They came out to watch the sailing once the serious stuff started, but had to leave on occasions when the constant sand blasting from the dust devils got too much for them.

Other NZers arrived over the next few days plus the overseas competitors making for one big blokarts community at Primm and out in the dry lake where the tent village was established. The 7 of us got together at the end of the day for drinks and a meal, often with some of the other competitors. We frequented 4 different restaurants, all cheap and all providing huge meals. We quickly started sharing meals, buying some essentials for breakfast, as the restaurant food wasn't always very healthy. Subway became our best friend for lunches or Starbucks for yoghurt and coffee early in the morning.

The sailing team always had an early start, breakfast and then at the RV about 7.30-8 am. This way we got to sail in different wind strengths as it increased during the morning. During the competition it also enabled everyone to check their gear, clean bearings, and get ready for the day. Overall it was windy, only using the 5.5s a few times. The rest was 3s and 4s, in anything from 12 - 25 knts with some of the gusts (mini whirlwinds) going a lot higher. Racing in the dust meant not always being able to see the next mark but generally it was safe with everyone going the same way. I remember, the heavy weights playing follow the leader for about 30 seconds as the dust storm was so thick visibility was reduced to about 10 metres.

The racing was the best you can get. Wide open spaces allowed true windward/leeward courses, tactical and very fast sailing. In the performance divisions, where the 5 of us sailed, the sailing was close and with good sportsmanship, everyone being very friendly off the race course and sharing ideas, well maybe! In NZ we always share any new developments, help the new sailors, and are generally open to increasing everyone's performance. I found my fellow competitors very much the same and it was good to meet up with friends from previous Worlds plus meet the new competitors. Out of the 30 in the heavies division, Bruce and I thought the top 10-12 were all very competitive, making for a tough competition. It was hard to recover if you made a mistake and even with a good race it only got you in to the top 3.

I was on the race committee and this proved to be a great group to work with, lead well by Teresa. Kyle was from Michigan but had been introduced to blokarts by the ABC 3 years ago and he was the spokesperson for the group. Lieven and Nico from Belgium had organised and run the previous Worlds, Lieven being the PRO. Jason was new to the position but knew the dry lake well and Ross was the chief organiser of the event plus had experience from events in NZ. Between us we felt we got most of the decisions right and also learnt a lot about what makes an event work well.





Away from the dry lake, the 7 of us quickly became seasoned travellers, making the most of our spare time, visiting Valley of Fire, Nevada's first National Park; spending a night at Vegas going to "O", a Cirque de Soleil spectacular, and always relaxing over dinner together.

After the racing was finished, we headed for Las Vegas for a couple of days, taking in all the sights while staying at The Luxor, the pyramid hotel. The highlight would have to have been exploring the Grand Canyon by helicopter, and landing next to the Colorado River for a champagne breakfast. All 7 of us agreed afterwards that the 5.30 am pick up was well worth the effort! There were plenty of shows to enjoy, plenty of shopping, and lots to see and do. Sunday night we had our final dinner together at the Luxor, it turning out to be hilarious after a few typically huge LV pina colodas. The late night girlie show afterwards was a bit of a disappointment in comparison, but hey, we had been up since 5 am, or MAYBE WE'RE ALL JUST GETTING A BIT OLD!

Monday, 16th April we said goodbye to Wayne and Julie who were lucky to be tripping around for another 12 days on their own, and 5 of us headed for the long, but enjoyable drive back to LA. Marg and I flew home that night, with 5 bags of luggage that we re-packed at the airport. All spot on at 23 kg. Bruce and Jenny spent a couple of days sightseeing in LA and Barry had some work to do over the next 5 days before coming home.

What a great trip and yes we will do it all again.



The Great Race - 100 km or 50 km

The forecast for Saturday 19 May was for SW 15-20 knts, rising midday and then dropping a bit in the early evening. On arrival at Muriwai the wind was about 15 knts, but up and down a bit.

16 set up and sailed down to the start, just over the creek. Ken drove down, and I took Matt and the start crew down with my trailer full of spare sails and mast pieces.

On arrival the beach had just sufficient room to run the race with another 80 minutes to low tide. Sweepers would keep everyone on their toes.

I set up marks, rigged up my kart as Julie and Marg were doing the start/finish duties, and got ready to race. Quite a few swapped sails at this point

CALENDAR

June

3 Ardmore Closed to ABC
2-4 Nth Island Champs - Ohakea
10 Winter Series
21 Mid-winter Christmas dinner
24 Winter Series

July

22 ABC AGM Followed by Winter Series

August

4/5 NZ BAI AGM BBC race day at Blokart Heaven

November

22- 25 90 Mile Beach club trip

Check the club website for any further dates past here.

Club Contacts

president@abc.gen.nz
secretary@abc.gen.nz

Editor

d.miles@xtra.co.nz

Websites

Club: www.abc.gen.nz
Social Media: [facebook](#)
Blokart: www.blokart.com
Blokart Assoc. Inc:
www.bai.co.nz

even though wind was still about 15 knts. Soft sand on the beach plus a prediction for the wind to drop was the main reason.

Starting was easy with the lower numbers (19 started) and everyone headed to the first turning mark 5 km along the beach. At this stage there was not much difference in speed between the 3 metre and 4 metre sails.

Jenny quickly established herself at the head of the 50 km division and lead from start to finish with Ryan getting 2nd, Richard 3rd in his first beach sail and Matt Murray the only other sailor to finish, again in his first beach sail.

The 100 km race proved tricky with a major wind change after about 60 km. The wind dropped and for a while went around to the south meaning everyone had to throw in some tacks. At this stage Bruce, Wayne and I had all had turns in the lead. In fact the lead had changed about 8 times. The change in wind meant Wayne lost the gains he had made the previous lap with Bruce and I both going passed, with Bruce getting through the light patch with only limited stops and wheeling and crept away to a healthy lead. Barry and David H also came through at this stage to hit 2nd and 3rd with 20 km to go.

Bruce easily held on to his lead, I managed to get passed Barry and David over the last 13 km and we ended as the only ones to finish. Most found it a bit hard going tacking in the lighter wind and soft sand (you want to try it with a 3 metre). The last couple of laps were lighter winds, but no tacking, so the sail to the finish was relatively easy.

Final Results

50 km Race

1st Jenny
2nd Ryan
3rd Richard
4th Matt

100 km Race

1st light weight and overall Bruce
1st heavy weight Russell
2nd light weight Barry
3rd light weight David

Russell



Stay Informed

Twitter

Follow us on Twitter @AKLblokart for the latest updates.



Mailing List

Subscribing to the notification service by email:

Step 1. Send an email to jiggle-join@ssn.co.nz (it does not matter what the subject line or message says)

Step 2. Reply to the join confirmation email that you will be sent after step 1.

Un-Subscribing:

Step 1. Send an email to jiggle-request@ssn.co.nz with "unsubscribe" as the subject AND the message.

Facebook

Visit our facebook page were you will find the friendly banter from our members.