



## The World Championship from an Australian Perspective

The Dragon embodies all the qualities that have made day-racing keelboats the preferred form of competition for many of the best helmsmen, from local fleet to Olympic standard sailors. The crew of three can compete in world-class events, and then line up the next weekend to do battle with their local fleets, where keen club sailors provide a level of competition that can surprise the big names. The Dragon's philosophy makes the boat flexible enough to cater for every level of ability. It remains one of the few top level racing classes where sailing skills still predominate over the level of finance available. These are just some of the reasons why yachtsmen of every age and every standard are attracted to the Dragon. Dragon regattas are among the World's most prestigious sailing events. The Dragon's reputation for top level competition combined with easy road trailing and simple launching procedures makes International and National events extremely popular with every standard of sailor.

There have been 21 Dragon Class World Championships, starting in 1965. Sailors from only seven countries have won. There have been six Danes, four Germans, three Australians, three Swedes, two Americans, a Canadian and an Austrian. Only the Dane Jespar Bank has ever won two Championships. It is a very competitive Class. The Dragon was the three-man keelboat for seven Olympic games, from 1948 (immediately after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War) to 1972. Again, northern European countries have dominated the medal hauls. But again, Australia is very competitive and was successful with John Cuneo. America, Sweden, Denmark and Greece have won once, with only Norway scoring two Gold medals.

There have probably been two eras of Australian Dragons in International competition. The first was the couple of decades after the Second World War. The English Speaking Union Cup in Hobart in 1963 ushered in an era of international competition and Trans continental travel. Many great Australian sailors tried to win the Dragon World Championship; Jock Sturrock won three Australian Dragon Championships (Prince Philip Cup –PPC), was an Olympian in the 5.5.metre class, and skippered *Gretel* and *Dame Pattie* in the Americas Cup. Mick Brooke was a PPC winner and an Olympian in Dragons with *Ghost III*. Jack Linacre won the 1962 PPC and regularly competed in Dragon events in Europe with his *GustelX1* and *Lill*. Graham Drane was twice an Olympian, in 1956 and 1964 in *Paula* and *Cambria*. Ediss Boyes sailed many regattas in Europe, almost winning in Spain. Jack Ayers and Norm Booth also competed widely in Europe. (And others, which I am sure to have missed – apologies). The first Dragon 'Worlds' were held in 1965 in Sweden, won by the legendary Ole Bernsten, then two years later by Buddy Freidrichs and then Bus Mosbacher, both going on to be Americas Cup icons. The Swedes won the next three worlds. Australia, by dint of its record of 'traveling' and great competitive spirit, gained a place in the world's rota. The worlds would come to Australia every 4<sup>th</sup> time, or each 8 years, starting in 1971. This was the end of the 'learning' phase.

It was the second trip to Australia for the Worlds in 1979 that 'we' finally won. Robbie Porter sailed his *Kirribilli* extremely well to take the title narrowly from Howard Piggot. Australians were no longer trying to win the Worlds. We had arrived. In 1987 Geelong hosted the regatta. The great Valdemar Bandolowski won, but not before engendering a spirit of Dragon competition unseen earlier in Australian sailing. Many of the current era of dragon sailors competed in Geelong and the bug bit several of them. Derwent River sailors Stephen Boyes and Nick Rogers competed in England in 1989 but were bested by arguably the best Dragon sailor of all time, Poul-Richard Høj-Jensen of Denmark. Not to be out done, Stephen went across the Pacific to Canada and won there in 1991. Jesper Bank won his first title, then the worlds were again in Australia, in Perth, and Nick Rogers won the '95 title. Two Australian Champions in four years. Carl Ryves lives in Sydney, and has won Olympic Trials; National Championships in Solings, Flying Dutchmen and 5.5s, but never a PPC! Carl sails with Olympic 5.5m gold medallist for'ard hand Dick Sargent. Yet this brilliant sailor and gentleman hasn't won a PPC either. Gordon Ingate sails Dragons and the Americas Cup, has won various World, National and State titles, and has competed in uncountable PPC, but has never won one!

Ian MacDiarmid has various World, National and State Titles, last year he held three different Class National Championships concurrently (Dragon, J24 and Adams10). There have been a number of Worlds regattas since 1995; Nick Rogers was runner-up in Hobart in 2003.

Nick and Stephen sail on the Derwent most weekends. Nick is looking forward to having his new Dragon on the water for the start of the new season. Together with Nick's new boat, the fleet in Australia continues to grow with four late model Petticrow Dragons being brought in from Europe during the past twelve months. The third era of Dragon sailors from Australia, even Hobart, may just be your entry away! Victorians Hugh Howard & Andrew Merrett are currently sailing in the European Dragon Gold Cup in France, along with 109 other Dragons. Seven local Hobart sailors have won the Prince Philip Cup for the Australasian Dragon Class Championship; Mick Purdon, Don Calvert, Stephen Shield, Steven Boyes, Nick Rogers (8 times), Bruce Calvert and David Graney.

Who will be the next PPC winner? Will they go on to win Worlds too? Ask yourself; what's stopping you?

### The Dragon Class World Champions

<i>Year</i>	<i>Port</i>	<i>Winner</i>	<i>Representing</i>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Port</b>	<b>Winner</b>	<b>Representing</b>
1965	Sweden	Ole Bernsten	Denmark	1987	Geelong Denmark	Valdemar	Bandolowski
1967	U.S.A	G.S. Friedrichs	U.S.A	1989	Torbay Denmark	Poul-Richard	Høj-Jensen
1969	Spain	Robert Mosbacher	U.S.A	1991	Canada	Stephen Boyes	Australia
1971	Hobart	Sundelin brothers	Sweden	1993	Germany	Jesper Bank	Denmark
1973	Greece	Roger Eliasson	Sweden	1995	Perth	Nick Rogers	Australia
1975	U.S.A	Bengt Palmquist	Sweden	1997	Sweden	Jesper Bank	Denmark
1977	Switzerland	Harry Ferreberger	Austria	1999	Martinique	Claus Høj -Jensen	Denmark
1979	Geelong	Robert Porter	Australia	2001	Hornbaek	Malte Phillip	Germany
1981	Germany	Marcus Glas	Germany	2003	Hobart	Dieter Schoen	Germany
1983	Canada	Bob Burgess	Canada	2005	Neustadt	Jorgen Schönherr	Denmark
1985	Douarnenez	Wolf Rappel	Germany				

Leigh Edwards  
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