



CLUB MARINE

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MARINE WONDERLAND

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TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY

See inside for details

Thrills 'n' spills



Aussies and Kiwis were in the thick of the action at the Thai Airways International Jet Ski World Cup in Thailand.

Without doubt, the biggest jet ski event in the world in terms of attracting the best teams, the most prize money, the most respected trophies and the biggest crowds, is the King's Cup – more specifically, the Thai Airways International Jet Ski World Cup in Pattaya, Thailand.

Held annually for the last 21 years in honour of the late Thai King Bhumibol Adulyadej, the

King's Cup has become the Holy Grail for Pro Class racers around the globe, most of whom were drawn to the 2016 event, run from December 1 to 4.

For Aussies and Kiwis, the event has become the yardstick; a measure of greatness that has attracted the top jet ski competitors from around Australasia as far back as 1995.

The event is truly international, drawing in competitors from five continents to the beautiful shores of Jomtien Beach in Pattaya City for three hard-fought days of competition, all enhanced by the customary Thai respect and hospitality to all involved.

Australian and Kiwi entrants this year included current Stock Runabout Champion Mitch Wayt,

current Australian and International Endurance Champion Christian D'Agostin, experienced elite class Pro Runabout GP racer Guy Greenland and multiple Womens Ski Champion Kylie Ellmers (NZ) as well as Carl Lampe (NZ) in Pro Runabout GP.

The premier Pro Ski GP and Pro Runabout GP classes, in particular, were highlights for competitors and fans, providing plenty of speed, noise and unrelenting determination and skill on the part of the racers.

AUSTRIAN AUSSIE

Austrian Kevin Reiterer threw down the gauntlet in the first Pro Ski GP moto riding his new Australian-developed 240hp SDC Trax turbo,

featuring a redesigned hull, for the first time. Reiterer took the win ahead of Frenchman Jeremy Poret, but disaster struck in the second moto with a huge get-off on the fast back straight with the worst possible outcome – a DNF.

"I'm not a racer who is satisfied with a second place," said Reiterer. "After a bad start off the line, I knew I had to make up as many positions as I could to fight for the win. It was a risk, but I had it under control. Then I crashed hard and the battery collapsed through the impact of the crash, ending my race completely."

With France's Jeremy Poret consistently fast and notching two wins and two seconds over the two days of competition, it was an impossible feat for reigning world champ Reiterer to recover and Poret won his second major title of the year.

Reiterer was magnanimous in defeat, though: "I did everything I could to make up for the loss of points from yesterday. Despite my second place, it was a damn cool weekend and I was happy with my speed. Congrats to Jeremy, who came out on top this weekend."

Pro Runabout GP machines were brutal – think an arm-wrenching turbocharged 550hp in a 250kg package that fires its rider to 100km/h in less than two seconds and you get some idea of the forces at play. At this level, it's all about stamina, experience and exceptional skill. The known players usually dominate, as did current IJSBA world champion, Gyorgy Kasza and

Opposite: A high-speed crash on day one cost Kevin Reiterer, and his all-new Trax turbo (90), the overall win.

Above: The field blasts away from the start.



Above: Enthusiastic spectators watch as (below) Gyorgy Kasza powers to victory – and US\$40,000 ...

Opposite: Aussie Christian D'Agostin took out the Endurance crown, judging fuel usage to a tee before (lower) taking top spot on the podium.

England's 10-time world champ, James Bushell, the pair splitting the wins.

However, the in-form Kasza was just too strong overall, with three wins and a second out-pointing Bushell to take the King's Cup and the impressive US\$40,000 prize.

"After winning for the last two years, I really wanted to win again," said Bushell. "But Kasza rode well and his ski suited the relatively flat conditions. I got a win in the second moto when it was rough and managed to pull a half-lap lead. My ski is set up as an all-round ski, suited to flat and rough conditions, whereas Kasza's is just awesome in the flat. I was pleased with the result and we

had some great battles. We'll work hard and come back stronger."

POPE UNSEATED

The last moto of the day was particularly eventful, with Phil Pope unseated after colliding with the first turn buoy and leaving Kuwaiti Yousef Al Abdulrazzaq with nowhere to go and unable to avoid Pope's ski – luckily, both riders were unscathed.

Aussie Pro GP star Guy Greenland lined up a Team Flamingo/Sea-Doo Centre-prepped RXPX to finish every moto, earning a very respectful fifth overall from 19 runners, on a borrowed ski and with limited seat time. It was a great effort that did not go unnoticed.

Endurance had a massive 29 entries, with a pretty even Yamaha/Sea-Doo spread and just a couple of Kawasakis.

Experienced endurance runners Christian D'Agostin, from Australia, and Yury Ryabko, from Russia, ended up at the pointy end in both races, with plenty of drama thrown in for good measure.

In the first race, D'Agostin took the lead on his Yamaha FX SVHO at the end of the opening lap, with Ryabko chasing hard. Tactics and strategy played a big part, with neither of the chargers able to complete race distance at wide-open throttle or full boost, as they both ran out of fuel.



two perfect wins for Aussie D'Agostin cemented his status as the world's best endurance racer

As it turned out, D'Agostin's fuel management could not have been more efficient, the Yamaha running out of fuel 50m from the finish line, but able to just splutter across to take the first win.

The second race was all Ryabko, but he was playing a high-stakes strategy using just too much boost to extend a lead over D'Agostin, who knew it was only a matter of time before his rival would have to back off the pace to conserve fuel. The second he powered-down, D'Agostin pounced and slowly but surely closed the gap until there was nothing in it with both neck and neck. The Russian paid the price for gambling on fuel, though, and spluttered to a halt again on the last lap.

WORLD'S BEST

In the end, two perfect wins for Aussie D'Agostin cemented his status as the world's best endurance racer.

"I truly couldn't ask for a more gratifying victory than to race the best in the world and come out on top," said D'Agostin. "It's a victory for everyone who believed in us."

Pro-am Womens Ski Limited was a hard-fought battle with veteran Melbourne-based New Zealander Kylie Ellmers and Japan's Yukiko Kume carving up the wins between them. Ellmers took two perfect scores into Sunday raceday on her





Above: Kiwi Carl Lampe at speed in Pro Runabout.

Below: Les Cooke (centre) with his radical world-title winning SDC TRAK 903 ski.

Sea-Doo Centre SDC Trak 903 after dominating the previous day, but then things began to unravel. Mechanical gremlins surfaced, with a blown head gasket and then a broken sponson allowing water into the hull, causing electrical issues and misfires, which allowed the Japanese rider to win the two final motos and thereby the count-back to the title.

Ellmers was upbeat despite the loss. "All said and done, I guess second on count-back, considering the issues I had, is a good result," said Ellmers later.

Aussie Stock Runabout Champion Mitch Wayt had a tough first day in Pro-Am Runabout Stock on his Yamaha FZR after taking a hit in the very first moto, which meant a seventh and eighth for the day, until an overnight patch-up of the ski netted a third and second on the Sunday. The results moved him up to fourth overall – pretty decent, considering the disappointment of the previous day.

"The crash set us back, but my team was awesome," said Wayt. "I can't thank them enough. I was happy with the pace I had, but I was forced to nurse the damaged FZR until we could send it out to a local shop for repairs overnight."

The 10 Amateur and Junior classes were hard-fought, with Finland, China, Estonia, UAE, Japan, Poland and Thailand winning medals.

Overall, the outcome for the Down Under racers was mixed, but it was certainly an action-packed world title event that had spectators on their feet throughout.

Finally, I'd like to offer special thanks to the AJSBA President and King's Cup Race Director Ross Moore for all his help and the organisers for their support and assistance.

fellow Victorian David Fragapane win at the very first King's Cup, back in 1999, with engines he built. Before long, his expertise was keenly sought by teams around the world.

In 2005, Cooke founded the Sea-Doo Centre in Thomastown, Melbourne, initially as a service workshop, but quickly diversified its business to manufacture in-house the majority of the parts required to build world championship-winning skis. SDC has also developed a range of accessories designed to improve both the performance and handling of recreational jet skis.

Specialising in electronics, CNC machining, vacuum-infused composites and alloy/stainless steel welding, Cooke's expertise resulted in a completely new stand-up watercraft in 2015 – the SDC TRAK 903. It utilises the 110hp Rotax triple-cylinder four-stroke from Sea-Doo's Spark watercraft in a custom-developed hull. The turbo race version puts out close to 250hp and has propelled Austrian Kevin Reiterer to multiple world titles.

Sea-Doo Centre-prepped watercraft have also claimed countless IJSBA World Championships, King's Cup and UIM Aquabike victories at the highest level of competition.



Pro profiles

Aussie and Kiwi racers are at the head of the pack in the world of jet-ski racing. We caught up with two world-beaters during the event.



Christian D'Agostin (AUS) – age 44
Class: Pro Open Endurance (Yamaha FX SVHO)

How did you get into jet-ski racing?

I spent a good 20 years of my life racing cars and moved to the Gold Coast, where I bought a jet ski just for a bit of fun – 10 years later I'm racing and winning world and Australian titles. I think it's the competitive bug that doesn't seem to go away, whatever age you are. You always want to compete.

How do you support it financially?

My friend and business partner, Cameron Martin, and I formed PTS racing last year with a plan and some good marketing people, and now we have a lot of good sponsors, including Yamaha, Gold Coast WaveRunners, WORX, Jettribe, United Petroleum and Loco energy drinks, which helps us offset the expense. The business/organisation side of racing overseas is massive, so Cam is the nuts and bolts that enables us to get the results we do and winning helps make everything a hell of a lot easier.

What do you get out of it?

A lot of personal satisfaction. It's nice to be able to play at the top level worldwide, having built it from the ground-up. We've picked our battles well, we set our goals high, and it's paid



Kylie Ellmers (NZ, now based in Melbourne) – age 42
Class: Pro-Am Womens Ski (SDC Trak 903)

How did you get into jet-ski racing?

I've always loved the water and my family has always raced cars, so the best thing for me was to pick up a jet ski and away I went. That was back in New Zealand in about 1998.

off. We are concentrating only on offshore endurance around the world, wherever it may be. China, Russia, USA and now Korea are all hosting top-level endurance races that pay well. Winning a King's Cup world title is a magnificent thing for us because it helps us get paid to go to events.

The score so far:

2013,14,15,16 Australian Offshore Endurance Champion
2016 Kings Cup World Cup Endurance Champion
2016 USA Long Beach to Catalina offshore race (runner-up) – was on course to smash fastest time, but ran out of fuel a mere 400m from home
2016 Chinese Motor Boat Open Endurance Champion
2016 4th Gran Turismo Russky GP (Russia)

How do you support it financially?

Well, firstly, my full-time job is with the Sea-Doo Centre in Melbourne. I build race skis for customers, but I also race and I think that gives us an edge with the workshop – because Les (Cooke, SDC proprietor) was also a good racer and won a lot of things, so we can both feel the handling and the power of the craft and understand it. On the UIM Aquabike World Tour, I'm a contracted rider, therefore Aquabike sponsors me as well and ships my skis, supplies my hotel rooms, picks me up from the airport. It's an amazing contract to have and I'm fortunate to be good enough to be asked to have a contract.

What do you get out of it?

When I first started jet skiing, I thought it would be amazing just to be able to go to the World Finals in the USA and compete and now I look back, having won seven world titles, about eight different King's Cup classes, as well as titles in the USA, New Zealand, Australia and Thailand. I've seen the world with it, I love it, I've got so many friends from it – I just really enjoy it. I'm really looking forward to 2017, as we've been developing a new SDC Trak hull to cope with the increased power we are getting from the turbo race-spec Spark engine. 