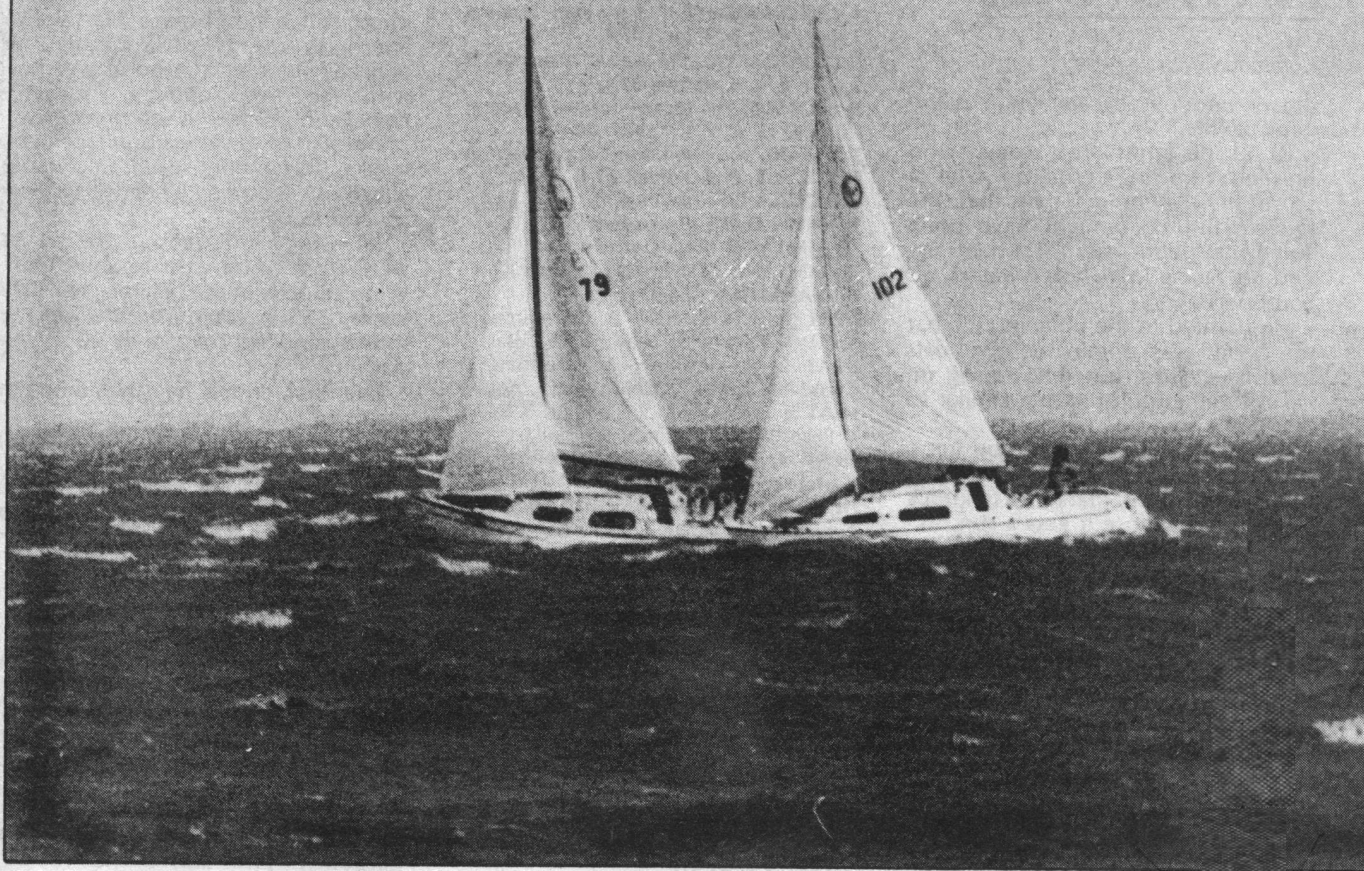


THE NATIONALS



ANATOMY OF A CHAMPIONSHIP: Pictures show the new RL24 champion, *Coolibah* (Barry Arnold, SA) overtaking *Sasha* (Ken Hackett, Vic.) in the final race of the RL-24 national championship series. Set of sail, bend of mast and superior speed shown clearly.

Gales and calms didn't stop the true champions

From the north to the south to the west young (and not-so-young!) Australians battled for supremacy in dinghies and yachts. Concentration and consistency won most of the championships.

THE AUSTRALIAN RL-24 championships, sailed off the Lake Wellington Yacht Club, near Sale, Vic, resulted in a clear cut win for the South Australian boat, *Coolibah* (Barry Arnold), from the Lake Bonney Yacht Club, SA.

Barry finished the seven race series with five wins and two seconds, and, with the 6 best results being counted,

finished with the almost incredible score of three points.

Since the second placegetter, and Victorian champion Ken Hackett (*Sasha*), finished with 33.1 points, the series was all wrapped up a couple of days before it actually ended.

Another South Australian *Cavalier* (Brian Mitchell), from Whyalla, was third, followed by RL-24 designer Rob

Legg (*Geronimo*) from the Southport Yacht Club.

Then came the local boats *Garuda* (Jim Wassel), *Safari* (Neil Bourboud) and *Pegasus* (Brian Castles).

The big thing about *Coolibah's* win was that it was achieved by a stock standard boat, with a stock standard rig, and nothing much out of the or-

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dinary under it except some damn good sailors.

RL-24 designer Rob Legg, who finished fifth in *Geronimo* with a score of 47.4 points, felt that the Queensland boat might have done somewhat better had it not been rigged for racing in its home waters, off Southport.

He pointed to the obvious fact that the series was dominated by boats from lake clubs, tuned to racing on Lake Wellington, or waters similar to it.

On these shallow lakes, you get a small, short sea, with all the qualities of a short-arm jab, that tends to knock a boat back before it gets a run on.

In conditions like this, you need sails of fuller cut than those he uses on the long swells off Southport; most of the time, he raced with one of his crew up forward, in the cabin, to keep the boat's nose down in the hope of making it run.

As against this, the conditions under which the series was sailed covered pretty well the entire weather spectrum, and nothing seemed to make any difference to Barry Arnold and *Coolibah*.

Stiffest wind was a 20-knotter, which prevailed in the final race of the series, which turned out pretty much a microcosm of the whole seven.

Approaching the last buoy, *Sasha* appeared to have something more than a show. But Barry Arnold, although behind Ken Hackett, was a wee bit upwind of him.

This enabled him to cut inside Hackett on the buoy, and steal a whole pocketful of his precious wind. By the time *Sasha* had gathered herself together, *Coolibah* was ahead, to windward, and driving hard for the line. There went the boat race.

The 1978 championships will, of course, now be sailed on Lake Bonney, near Barmera, SA.

This means that conditions will be pretty much the same as they were on

3, **CAVALIER, SA** (Brian Mitchell). Placings: 5, 1, 2, 7, 3, 9, 4. Points: 39.7.

4, **GERONIMO, Qld.** (Rob Legg). Placings: 2, 5, 3, 7, 7, 3. Points: 47.4.

5, **GARUDA, Vic.** (Jim Wassel). Placings: 11, 3, 7, 1, 6, 4, 8. Points: 52.4.

6, **PEGASUS, Vic.** (Bruce Castles). Placings: 4, 10, 4, 13, 4, 5, 5. Points: 60.

7, **SAFARI, Vic.** (Neil Bourboud). Placings: 6, 4, 8, 4, 5, 8, 6. Points: 63.4.

8, **AQUILA** (Bill Macintosh).

9, **HAPPY DAYS** (Bruce Avery).

10, **TIMTARRI** (Ross Corben).

11, **LOWANA III** (Michael Shannon).

12, **VALENTINE** (Ralph Higgins).

HEAT 1: 1, Coolibah; 2, Geronimo; 3, Sasha; 4, Pegasus; 5, Cavalier; 6, Safari.

HEAT 2: 1, Cavalier; 2, Coolibah; 3, Garuda; 4, Safari; 5, Geronimo; 6, Aquila.

HEAT 3: 1, Coolibah; 2, Cavalier; 3, Sasha; 4, Pegasus; 5, Gerinimo; 6, Aquila.

HEAT 4: 1, Garuda; 2, Coolibah; 3, Gerinimo; 4, Safari; 5, Sasha; 6, Timtarri.

HEAT 5: 1, Coolibah; 2 Sasha; 3, Cavalier; 4, Pegasus; 5, Safari; 6, Garuda.

HEAT 6: 1, Coolibah; 2, Aquila; 3, Sasha; 4, Garuda; 5, Pegasus; 6, Lady Jane.

HEAT 7: 1, Coolibah; 2 Sasha; 3, Geronimo; 4, Cavalier; 5, Pegasus; 6, Safari.

NON-TRAPEZE BOATS 1, Timtarri (Ross Corben); 2, Lowana III (Michael Shannon).

