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# Newcomers get a shock introduction to the sea

John Dayman, Broome Advertiser  
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Broome Sailing Club © John Dayman on his Impulse, Blue Chip.

SAILING: A perfect morning greeted seven boats from Broome Sailing Club on Sunday, January 20.

For the first time, we had the new 14ft skiff Okanui sailed by Gary Harding and his son Matt joining in the fleet for its first race in Broome.

There was an initial late start with a missing fuel tank, which delayed the time on the water.

For the first time BSC ran two separate starts – mono hulls first, followed by the cats. Two races were scheduled with a short course as the wind was very light with an incoming strong tide making it even trickier.

With a slight bias to port, the start was won by the new boy on Okanui, closely followed by Phil Cox on Fireball and Loi Odore on Silver Surfer.

All boats were very, very close at the first mark and the lead swapped between all three boats. First blood went to Okanui which came seven seconds in front of my Blue Chip Impulse, then 28 seconds later came Cox and Odore... what a race of changing fortunes.

In the meantime, the breeze had continued to lighten and the cats had started their first race. Finistere came in first sailed by Stan Best. The tide and lack of wind prevented the others from completing the short course.

With the menacing sky building up north and moving down the beach, the decision was left up to the individual skippers whether they wanted to do a second race.

The race would be to get the last start in before the proverbial hit the fan. The second mono hull race was to be one triangle only.

Down to two starters, the Impulse and Harding's Okanui, it was painstakingly slow up the first leg.

Thunder and lightning in the distance grew closer, louder and the atmosphere felt like it was about to explode.

With Harding's Okanui first at the weather mark, the decision was to go straight back to the start finish and try to get a race in and back on shore safely. With a last-minute dash and speed from the Impulse, the second race was taken out by me before the wind swung to the east in a flash, as it did the previous weekend, and came in with a bang.

Newcomers to BSC's rapid inflatable boat safety, Andy Gatt and Ado Malkovic, were about to get baptised in a big way. The call was to keep an eye on our two new sailors to the club cats, Andy Greig and Martiju McKenna.

In a flash, one was over and drifting toward the outer Gantheaume reef, while the others were rocketing back to home base.

John Dayman is the Broome Sailing Club race officer.

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