

AUSTRALIA'S TOP POWERBOAT TEAMS GEARING UP FOR GEELONG CLASSIC

Sparks are set to fly when Australia's top offshore powerboat teams let loose at Geelong next weekend, as part of the Geelong Classic offshore powerboat race in Corio Bay.

The race is the second round of the 2006 ACME Fibreglass Supplies Offshore Powerboat Series, which began in Melbourne on the Australia Day weekend.

A record five Class One boats have entered the Geelong Classic; the biggest Class One field seen in Australian racing for many years.

Queensland-based Class One team 'Maritimo' will field three boats at the Geelong round, including current Australian Champion Bill Barry-Cotter and partner Steve Jellick, and first round winners Luke Durman and Ross Willaton.

AFT Maritimo pair Peter McGrath and Chris Rosch will be looking to make amends after a disappointing start in Melbourne where they were unable to finish due to mechanical problems.

ACME Racing and the Victorian-based Smorgon Steel teams complete the Class One entry list, while a large field of powerboats will battle for Class honours in 4 other classes of competition.

All competitors have the opportunity to conduct testing and practice on Saturday February 11th, between 3.30 and 4.30pm on the Corio Bay course.

The boats will be launched at Limeburners Point boat ramp on Sunday February 12th from 10.00am, with racing scheduled to start at midday.

Viewing the race is free to the public, and the best vantage point will be beachfront areas near the Steampacket Garden on Eastern Beach Road. The presentation ceremony will also take place in this area at the conclusion of the race.

Measuring over 13 metres in length and composed of lightweight carbon fibre and kevlar materials, Class One boats are often described as 'Formula One on water'.

A typical vessel costs in excess of \$600,000 and they are able to reach speeds in excess of 200km/h.

"The teams really enjoy the Geelong round of the series, and I think it's due to the fact that the race is always very well supported by the Geelong public," series secretary Antony DeFina said.

“Some of the boats competing in this year’s series are absolute world class machines that have competed overseas in offshore events, and it’s certainly worth a trip to Corio Bay next weekend to witness them in full flight.”

ACME fibreglass supplies are the proud sponsors of the 2006 Australian Offshore Powerboat Series with good support from associate sponsors Australian Futures Trading and Nautilus Marine.

Saturday February 11th

What: Testing & Practice
Where: Corio Bay, Geelong
Time: 3.30- 4.30pm

Sunday February 12th

What: Geelong Classic Offshore Powerboat race
Where: Corio Bay
Time: Racing from 12.00pm

