

SPECTACULAR FLIP ENDS ACME RACING'S NEWCASTLE OFFSHORE CHALLENGE CAMPAIGN

Spectacular scenes at round three of the ACME Fibreglass Supplies Australian Offshore Powerboat Series have seen ACME Racing brothers Steve and Andrew Searle flip their Class One vessel while leading the Class One field during lap three of the Newcastle Challenge.

After a brilliant start to the offshore event, ACME was leading the field when they encountered a troublesome turning point causing them to flip their million dollar offshore machine in gusts of winds that reached 30 knots.

"We were really powering around the course when we flipped our boat so it's quite disappointing," said ACME driver Andrew Searle.

"We took the corner pretty fast, and we were probably doing 150km/h when we flipped, it will most likely have caused about \$100 000 damage.

"It was a combination of speed and over steering as well as trying to correct too quickly that caused the boat to flip sideways around the corner.

"The cockpit filled up with water so quickly, it was a little scary, but we will be fine.

"I managed to get out through the escape hatch, and then pull Steve out as well, so I'm just glad we are both okay.

Steve Searle works the throttles for the ACME team and was taken to hospital for routine checks after being rescued, but he is said to be doing well.

"Steve took in a bit of water, but we both got out fine, unfortunately we won't be able to race in Botany Bay next week but we will return for Mooloolaba you can bet on that."

Amazingly, the rest of the field assembled for a shortened forty minute race shortly after the ACME flip.

Father son combination Bill and Tom Barry-Cotter have recorded a landmark victory in what was Tom's first ever race in an offshore powerboat.

After crossing the line in second place behind SIMRAD, Maritimo were handed the victory due to a penalty incurred by SIMRAD after missing a turning marker in today's action packed Newcastle Challenge.

"It is a fantastic feeling to get a win in my first ever race, the boat was flying around everywhere today and was very loose, so I am really pleased with the effort," said Tom Barry Cotter.

Local team Red Bellies were a dominant force in the Class Three- six litre field, and came away with a victory in front of a huge home crowd that lined the shores to get a glimpse of the action.

It was the first win of the year for the Red Bellies team, and they were grinning from ear to ear after the race.

Defending Class Three- six litre champions, the Red Bellies team is back on track and will look to push hard for a victory next week.

"The boat was magnificent today, it was really quick and the new engines ran like a dream," said Red Bellies competitor Bruce Sanders.

Hogs Breath secured their third victory in a row at Newcastle today, and Paul Gibbs and his partner Paul Fowlds just keep going from strength to strength in this year's series.

Having won the Class Three-four litre championship three years running, victory today brings them one step closer to a fourth consecutive championship win.

Don McClymont and his partner Nick Purvis had their third victory of the series for 2006.

"Conditions were very difficult today, so we are just happy to get the win and look to Sydney next week," said Don McClymont

It was a solid effort by Cyclone 1900 in the Production Class with the team having a good win in conditions that were very tough on the smaller vessels.

OUTRIGHT ROUND RESULTS (PROVISIONAL)- NEWCASTLE CHALLENGE

SHORTENED 40 MINUTE RACE FORMAT DUE TO FLIP

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|----------------|------------------------------|
| 1. MARITIMO | Bill/ Tom Barry Cotter |
| 2. SIMRAD | Ross Willaton/ Luke Durman |
| 3. AFT | Peter McGrath/ Steve Jellick |
| 4. RED BELLIES | Bruce Sanders/ Colin Craven |
| 5. SMORGON | Tony Low/ Simon Isherwood |

CLASS WINNERS- GEELONG CLASSIC

Class One	MARITIMO
Class 3-6 Litre	RED BELLIES
Class 3-4 Litre	HOGS BREATH
National 'A'	ADVANTAGE MARINE
Production	CYCLONE 1900