

WILLATON & DURMAN MAKE IT TWO STRAIGHT AT GEELONG CLASSIC

Newly formed Maritimo racing duo Ross Willaton and Luke Durman today secured their second win from as many starts at the Geelong Classic; round two of the ACME Fibreglass Supplies Offshore Powerboat series.

In front of a crowd of thousands that lined the Corio Bay foreshore, Willaton and Durman took outright honours 30 seconds ahead of Maritimo team mates Bill Barry-Cotter and Steve Jellick.

The Geelong round of the national series is only the pair's second race together in Class One competition, and they were understandably thrilled with their win.

"Today's win is much more satisfying because we won on our own merits," Luke Durman said, referring to the time penalty given to AUS1 in Melbourne which in turn handed them the win.

"It's an understatement to say that two wins in a row is a great start to the year, and now hopefully we can keep it up!"

ACME Racing's Steve and Andrew Searle led the field through the first lap of the course and looked to be in a commanding position as they raced past the major spectator area at Steampacket Garden.

However it didn't take long for current Champion Bill Barry-Cotter and Steve Jellick to attack and Maritimo AUS1 snatched the lead just one lap later.

The Smorgon Steel entry of Tony Low and Simon Isherwood was forced to retire with a broken fuel pump belt just two laps into the race, posting another DNF in what has been a disappointing start to their 2006 season.

"It's very frustrating because it was a relatively minor drama that forced us to pull out, but we have some time now before the next round in Newcastle to get everything right." a dejected Simon Isherwood said.

The Class One fight became a battle of the Maritimo team mates when ACME Racing retired with a broken blower belt just one lap later.

Barry-Cotter maintained the lead for several laps until Willaton and Durman began to mount their charge halfway through the 11 lap race.

With just three laps remaining the duo stormed past their teammates on the main straight and powered away to build a sizeable gap at the head of the field.

“The course was a little choppier than we expected, but our boat seemed to handle the conditions really well,” said Durman.

“Once we passed AUS1 we just kept our heads down and focused on getting to the finish line first.”

Class Three-6 litre entry Navman, piloted by Mat Humphrey and Wayne Jones, put in one of the most outstanding performances of the Geelong Classic, finishing fourth outright and first in Class 3 Six litre.

“It’s great to get a win in our class ... we certainly had a lot of fun out there today!” Matt Humphrey said.

“We eased off towards the end of the race because I’m still getting used to the boat and didn’t want to push our luck.”

The Class 3-4 litre Kwozzy Racing entry of Jim Harris and Adam Nicolls were handed a penalty after missing a marker point.

Hog’s Breath Racing’s Paul Gibbs and Paul Fowlds took out Class 3, 4–litre ahead of the Jackson’s Marine entry and entertained the crowds with a late-race battle for fourth with Navman.

“We thought we might be able to catch Navman but couldn’t quite get there ... still we’re happy with another class win.” Paul Gibbs said.

Advantage Marine won the National ‘A’ Class ahead of Thycon, who were forced to make hasty repairs to their boat’s hull after Saturday’s testing session.

Willaton and Durman now hold a 275 point lead in the Series.

The series moves to Newcastle for Round 3 on May 5th. The break will give teams a great chance to get things right for some fast and enthralling competition in N.S.W.

OUTRIGHT ROUND RESULTS (PROVISIONAL)- GEELONG CLASSIC

1. R. Willaton/ L. Durman	Simrad Maritimo	60 min 7 secs
2. B. Barry-Cotter/ S. Jellick	Maritimo	+ 30 secs
3. P. McGrath/ C. Rosch	AFT Maritimo	+ 2 min 58 secs
4. M. Humphrey/ W. Jones	Navman	8 laps
5. P. Gibbs/ P. Fowlds	Hogs Breath	8 laps

CLASS WINNERS- GEELONG CLASSIC

Class One	R. Willaton/ L. Durman	Simrad Maritimo
Class 3-6 litre	M. Humphrey/ W. Jones	Navman

Class 3-4 Litre
National 'A'
Production

P. Gibbs/ P. Fowlds
D. McClymont/ N. Purvis
G. Walters/ A. Hardiman

Hogs Breath
Advantage Marine
Cyclone 1900

