

ACME OFFSHORE POWERBOAT SERIES
MAKING A SPLASH IN 2006!

The country's top offshore powerboat teams are preparing for one of the toughest seasons in recent history when the 2006 ACME Fibreglass Supplies Australian Offshore Powerboat Series (AFSPS) kicks off on Australia Day weekend.

This year's field is one of the largest in recent years, with five Class One boats entered among a total of 18 registered teams in 7 classes. The series has strong support from major sponsor ACME Fibreglass Supplies and associate sponsor Australian Futures Trading (AFT).

All the 2005 Australian class champions are back to defend their crowns, and all will be keen to secure an early lead over their rivals at Melbourne's Hobson's Bay Classic; the opening race of the series on January 29th.

Current Class One Australian Champion Bill Barry-Cotter has expanded his Class One team and will spearhead a three-way assault by team Maritimo Offshore Racing.

"This Australian season is a big investment for the Maritimo team. We have pulled out of the European Series where we had a spare boat, so we have decided to run three boats in the Australian Series this year. It's going to be hard work, but we are looking forward to the season and trying bring some new boats and sponsors to the series," said Bill Barry-Cotter, owner of Maritimo Racing.

Local Victorian team Smorgon Steel is hoping to bounce back into contention for line honours after a disappointing 2005, where during Round 3 the team destroyed a boat after it flipped violently.

"It's going to be a real tough season - one of the boats we're up against has a 50% horsepower advantage and others have top technology and unlimited budgets. Our aim is to keep upright, as the last two years we have flipped one and sunk another, but we are excited about competing" said Tony Low-owner of the Smorgon Steele team and life member of the AOPC.

Often described as 'the Formula One of water sports' offshore powerboats are high-tech, powerful machines that can reach speeds in excess of 200 km/h and cost upwards of \$600,000.

New to the series this season is a free insurance offer from sponsor Nautilus Marine Insurance Agency.

To inspire new members into the class, Nautilus is offering each production class entrant who completes in at least two rounds of the season free insurance on their vessel up to the value of \$1000.

"Nautilus Marine is proud to be associated with the Australian Offshore Powerboat Club. We are especially excited about being the sponsor of the Production Class and see this as a way of promoting the sport of offshore racing at a grass roots level," said Paul Wilson, Managing Director of Nautilus Marine.

Held between January and July, the 2006 AFSPS series is comprised of six rounds; with two in each of Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. The series starts in Melbourne and heads north up the eastern seaboard to finish on the Gold Coast.

Each event typically consists of practice and testing on Saturday, with boats fiercely battling it out for points on Sunday.

ROUND BY ROUND:

ROUND	LOCATION	DATES
Round 1- <i>Hobsons Bay Classic</i>	Melbourne, Victoria	28 th and 29 th January
Round 2- <i>Geelong Classic</i>	Geelong, Victoria	11 th and 12 th February
Round 3- <i>Newcastle Challenge</i>	Newcastle, NSW	6 th and 7 th May
Round 4- <i>Botany Bay Classic</i>	Botany Bay, NSW	13 th and 14 th May
Round 5- <i>Mooloolaba Classic</i>	Mooloolaba, Queensland	1 st and 2 nd July
Round 6- <i>Gold Coast 100</i>	Gold Coast, Queensland	8 th and 9 th July

