



El Coyote looms over Ichi Ban, an Adams 10, as they approach the mark

Now the longest serving living monarch, King Bhumibol Adulyadej, on his ascension to the throne on the 5th of May 1950, stated "I will rule this nation with equality and ensure the benefit and happiness of the people of Siam."



Despite all the political intrigue and turmoil, he has stuck to his word and maintained the respect of his people with his Coronation Day anniversary widely celebrated.

In 1996 local sailors wishing to commemorate this occasion initiated the first Platu Coronation Cup which, along with the Thai Optimist National Championships, is now packaged in the Top of the Gulf Regatta to form a festival of sailing unparalleled in the region.

Now in its ninth year, the Top of the Gulf Regatta saw 253 craft take to water (2012: 228) including 129 Optimists (2012: 110), 29 windsurfers, 59 dinghies and beachcats and 36 keelboats and ocean multihulls.

Longstanding chairman of the organising committee, Bill Gasson, was a little disappointed with this year's keelboat entries and particularly the fall off in ocean multihulls (3), despite Thailand being a Mecca for multihulls and home to numerous Corsairs and Fireflies that have participated in the past. Not including the Platus, also absent this year were the sports

boats, in particular the Phuket 8s and Shaw 650s.

No Hong Kong entries featured this year in the keelboat races other than Andrew Moore's Platu *Tigrana*, although Hong Kong was well represented in the dinghy and beachcat events.

The continued success of the event depends heavily on the support received from Ocean Marina Yacht Club (OMYC), host

## TOP OF THE GULF Regatta

sponsor of the event, whose marina and club facilities provide the base. Numerous sponsors also support the event including this year the property developer Sansiri, Landrover and Jaguar, and Singha, along with countless secondary sponsors and suppliers of products and services, with Thai Airways flying in the overseas press.

The recently-expanded marina facilities make life so much easier for the participating crews despite the appeal of 'off the beach' style regattas

The skippers' briefing for the keelboats and ocean multihulls was held on Friday, the 3rd of

participants to the start area for the keelboats and ocean multihulls with a respectable 1100 start and the first of two races for the day.

The first sent the IRC boats around a two-lap windward/leeward with the Platus a similar but slightly shorter course. With 15 one-design Platus, representing eight countries, competing for the Coronation Cup there were congested scenes at the marks with

barely seconds separating the contestants as the wind strengthened to 15 knots.

Chris Way and his Easy Tiger Team from Australia were back to defend their title earned in the



Ocean Marina Yacht Club, host sponsor of the event

narrowest of margins last year on count-back, with runner-up Rolf Heemskerk, along with

May, followed by the opening ceremony on the OMYC lawn where generous quantities of Mont Clair wines and Singha beers flowed.

### Day 1 Saturday 4 May 2013

Blue skies with puffs of cumuli welcomed

two teams from Singapore Management University (SMU), other regulars as well as newcomers Team Black Betty also from Australia and Hong Kong's team on *Tigrana*.

Three other race areas were designated for the Optimists, dinghies and beach cats and the windsurfers. The 129 Optimists, in particular, made a splendid sight on the water with the dexterity and manoeuvring skills of the youngsters most inspiring

After the success last year of including the Top of the Gulf Regatta as one of the windsurf stops in the RS:One NeilPryde Racing Series, the windsurfers, having staunchly the challenge of the kiteborders to their Olympic status, were back but no longer confined to the marina. This was less impressive from a spectator point of view since it clashed with racing on the other courses.

Competition was equally keen in the Laser 4.7, 420, 470, Standard and Radial divisions including single and double-handed events. Several countries sent representatives to practice in preparation for the SEA Games in Myanmar in December 2013. Conditions proved testing with several capsize. The F18 and open beach multihulls, however, seemed to relish the conditions.

A second 18nm race followed for the keelboat and ocean multihull fleet taking them around an offshore mark returning via Koh Rang Kwan and into the finish. Day prizes were presented on the lawn at Ocean Marina

where the Mills King 40, *Foxy Lady VI* (ex-*Blondie IV*), finished with two out of two in IRC

Racing 1, with *Thai Navy 1* 1st in Race 1 and *Ichi Ban* 1st in Race 2 in IRC Racing 2. The SMU team on *Hi Jinks* also made it two out of two in IRC Racing 3. In the Platus, just five minutes separated 1st and 15th place in Race 1 with Gary McNally and his Black Betty Team savouring victory as they again did in Race 2.



In the Ocean Multihulls, David Liddell's Corsair 37, *Miss Saigon*, which he had sailed around from Phuket, took the daily double in both races with Khun Nim's Crowther 42, *Sonic*, 2nd in both.

Afterwards participants adjourned to the Royal Varuna Yacht Club where the Kingdom Property Party was getting into full swing. Bringing back memories of the old Raimon Land parties, it was perhaps not surprising to find Nigel Cormick now at the helm of Kingdom, again assisted by Henri Young promoting their Southpoint project but still with an appetite for supporting sailing in Thailand.

### Day 2 Sunday 5 May 2013

Despite being hazy, the breeze piped up when racing got underway on Sunday, the 5th of May. Keelboats and ocean multihulls started with a windward/leeward. The Ker 40, *KukuKerChu*, was leading the IRC Racing 1 fleet but a kite hoist at the windward mark went awry and things went downhill. Despite this, the Ker still managed to outfox *Foxy Lady VI* and *Won Ma Rang* taking line and handicap honours after the former blew its spinnaker on the run into the line.

There was plenty of action particularly on the first downwind leg, in a strengthening breeze. Coming in to the leeward mark together, *Dynamite* broached while *Souay 1* at first managed to hold its course before

becoming a similar victim shortly thereafter but recovered quickly.

Similarly there was lots of drama in the Platu fleet with Rod Berteaux's (AUS) Platu 122 losing its rig. Two further windward/leeward races followed for the Platus.

*Sonic* diverted to pick up a man knocked overboard from *El Coyote* and was given redress with a 2nd place finish by the international jury.

The jury was kept relatively busy early on not only with the keelboats but also several protests by the Optimist sailors. They had even developed their own web page where protest results were posted (totg2013.juryboard.org).

The IRC Racing and Ocean Multihull fleets were then sent on a passage race down towards Pattaya and back whilst the Platus enjoyed two further windward/leewards.

At the end of the day, in the Platus Brian McMaster's (AUS) *Problem Child* had made gains with three 1st places, with *Black Betty* hanging on to 2nd overall after five races.



A boisterous Platu fleet starts in clear conditions

In the multihulls the Corsair F27, *Black Swan*, took the first race whilst *Miss Saigon* added a third bullet in the second race to hang on to overall.

Mat Allen's *Ichi Ban* stretched its lead adding two bullets in IRC Racing 2 whilst the X-99, *Hi Jinks*, added a third bullet from its one passage race for the day.

The situation was hotting up amongst the five boats in IRC Racing 1 with honours for the day shared between *KukuKerChu* and *Won Ma Rang*. *El Coyote* and *Siren* made up the numbers but were unfortunately out classed.



Siren, a regular contender, entered in IRC Racing 1

The evening's prize-giving concluded the Pattaya stop of the RS:One NeilPryde Racing Series with numerous awards to local and visiting windsurfers.

### Day 3 Monday 6 May 2013

Two windward/leeward races for IRC Racing 1, 2 and Ocean Multihulls and three for the Platus and IRC 3 kept everyone busily engaged on the water in conditions, which had moderated significantly from the day before with 8-12 knots.

The racing marks were initially set at a distance 1nm apart which was stretched to 1.5nm for the second race of the day. A combined start for IRC Racing 1 and 2 meant there was not a great deal of room on the line.

Separate starts in the second race meant there was much more space but also more room to be seen by the race

officers with *Ichi Ban* called OCS, the new bow sprit on the 1977 built Adams 10 apparently just over. This gave the 1984 J-41, *Souay 1*, its big chance and it was at one time leading the pack until an unfortunate sheet entanglement on a winch

allowed *Ichi Ban* to recover the lead and the take the bullet. *Souay 1*'s skipper, Jean Rheault, was philosophic, more concerned that the crew had fun than with recriminations.

The big cat *Sonic* came into its own in the Ocean Multihulls with two bullets, relegating *Miss Saigon* into 2nd place in both.

That evening brought an end to competition for the dinghies and open beach multihulls as well as the Thailand Optimist National Championships. As always it was a splendid site to have the kids sharing the limelight with the keelboat sailors, which makes this such a special event.

### Day 4 Tuesday 7 May 2013

FH again had the pleasure of joining *Souay 1* for the final race of the regatta, while the Platus were given an additional race to complete their 10-race series. *Souay 1* had a great start at the pin end but the slick crew work of *Ichi Ban* added to their tally of six bullets. *Thai Navy 1* finished 2nd and, despite *Dynamite* taking 3rd place, *Souay 1* had done enough to hold on to 3rd overall.

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A clean sweep for *Hi Jinks* with seven bullets from seven races gave them the IRC Racing 3 overall title whilst the Hood 23, *Ooh La La* (ex-*Salamander II* out of Darwin), which had also sailed around from Phuket, finished 2nd and the Beneteau 21.7, *Thai Two*, and its Japanese crew, 3rd.

The Australians on the Platu, *Problem Child*, put up a strong challenge for a 1st and 2nd place with Hong Kong's *Tigrana* two 3rds on the final day. Four bullets in the series, however, allowed *Black Betty* to hang on to overall and gave Gary McNally the privilege of collecting the Coronation Cup at the closing and prize giving party.

It was again a wonderful evening as the sun went down on another successful Top of the Gulf Regatta with the Thai dancers enhancing the cultural experience. In Ocean Multihulls, *Miss Saigon* took the overall honours from *Sonic* and *Black Swan*. It was a delighted Bill

Bremner and crew, including tactician Steve McConaghy, on *Foxy Lady VI* who collected the decorative plate and champagne in IRC Racing 1 with *Won Ma Rang* 2nd and *KukuKerChu*, 3rd.

Jerry Rollin was unavailable this year so RO duties had been assigned to Australian Dennis Thompson for his first Asian regatta. He and his team did a commendable job.

True to his word, the king's subjects indeed enjoyed the Top of Gulf Regatta and the Coronation Cup and, fortunately, are willing to share the Coronation anniversary celebrations with visitors. May this long continue.

Plans are already underway for the 10th special edition, so

mark the 1st to the 5th of May 2014 in your diaries.

### Thailand Optimist National Championships

#### Dinghies, beach multihulls

The Top of the Gulf Regatta encompasses not only keelboat and ocean multihull racing.



Twelve classes include F18s, open beach multihulls, dinghies and Optimists. For the past eight years the event has also embraced the Thailand Optimist National Championships. Started in 1976, it is now into its 38th year. This year these championships were sponsored by the property developer Sansiri, which also sponsored the local Thai keelboat, *Ooh La La*, as part of its commitment and civic conscience to give back to the community.

Twelve Optimist sailors from Hong Kong participated including teams from ABC and RHKYC. Malaysia and Myanmar both sent teams whilst Indonesia and the Netherlands each had one representative.

Held over three days, there were seven races despite the disruption on the second day, when storm conditions reduced sailing to just one race. Kamonchanok Klahan took the girls' prize finishing 2nd overall and Pongsapat Pumyam with three bullets taking the Cup.

Tiny Zaifah Zailie Hardiy of Malaysia, aged 12, took 3rd place in the overseas entries, with Muhamad Uzair Amin 2nd and RHKYC's Calum Gregor, 1st.

In the F18 class, Pom Green & Apple took seven out of eight races with Hong Kong's Mike Scantlebury & Dave Harris finishing with a bullet in the last race to take 2nd overall. By the end, the fleet of six was decimated. Only two contested the final day, after the conditions on Sunday had taken their toll.

Damrongsak and his brother

Sakda Vongtim made it a clean sweep of the eight races in open beach multihull with Fiji's Grahame Southwick & Khaipho placing 2nd.

Four bullets

from eight races gave Apiwat Sri-hgam the title in Laser 4.7. Hong Kong's Sofia-Marie Mascia finished 2nd in Laser Radial missing out to Kamoluwan 'Bam' Chanyim, who has already set her sights on becoming the first Thai woman to qualify for the Olympics in Laser Radial.

Keerati Buaong took the honours in the fleet of 13 Laser Standard while Sittisart Ponpun and Peerapol Wisaka and Navee Thamsoontorn and Nut Butmarasri took the honours in the double-handed 420s and 470s respectively.

### RS:One NeilPryde Racing Series

Held over two days (4-5.May.13), 29 sailors comprising 12 men, five women, eight boys and four girls contested this event held off the beach at Ocean Marina Yacht Club, Jomtien which included competitors from Myanmar and Indonesia.

After seven races the Thais dominated with Navin Singsart (Men), Siripon Kaewduangngam (Women), Thanatip Seubyubon (Boys) and Duangkamon Phongern (Girls) collecting the winners' trophies.