

2010 SA Champs “was it worth it?”

Arriving safely back on the farm in Queenstown, after been away from my lovely family for six days, now having travelled approximately 2500km's, still to cover another 1000km's on Friday as we all head on home to Cape Town, totalling 3500km's, one cant but stop and wonder **“was this all worth it ?”** Whilst preparing my boats for the JHB SAMPBA event and travelling up by car, this question constantly plagued my thoughts which were also fuelled by all the comments and info one has heard over the past years from boaters, nationally, which have competed in Johannesburg. From having to deal with the implications of the high altitude, to competing against the guys with big attitudes. LOL

This I have to say upfront, as I experienced it this weekend” **Is an Urban Myth”** that certainly needs to be expelled.

From the moment I arrived at the Pomona Road venue on Thursday afternoon, now realising that my favourite three letters of the alphabet are G.P.S. and that a sweet little lady in a black box stuck to my windscreen really does know where she is going “thankfully” the Kempton Park Model Boat Club members could not have been more hospitable to make me feel at home. How they did it I don't know, but they had gone as far as to make sure that it was raining, at times pouring, with a good breeze blowing across the water, presenting me with a perfect Cape boating day.

Elated to have arrived at the dam safely, yet somewhat tired after travelling 800km's that morning, especially after waking up an hour and a half to early due to incorrect G.M.T. settings on my Black Berry, I decided to rather leave my boats in the car for the day and to delay the expected battle with the set up of the boats for Friday morning.

Knowing that my accommodation was all prepared for me by the hosting club and that a get together braai was waiting to be had that evening, I rather decided to best check if my Windhoek larger tasted any different at high altitude. The taste was certainly the same, however they just seemed to go down that much faster, resulting in my exact recollection of Thursday evening activities being somewhat vague, yet certainly enjoyable.

With my BlackBerry's G.M.T. time now set correct, I'm promptly woken at 5am Friday morning, feeling as if I had not even gone to sleep, and for some strange reason having a very heavy head, must be the high altitude I thought.

Been caught up in the flurry of everyone getting their equipment ready for the days testing, I managed to gather my thoughts as I enjoyed a much needed breakfast with coffee which was laid out, preparing myself for the anticipated long day of testing and setting up that so many had had to have done before me. In a giff we were at the venue, which is a stone throw away from where we were staying and once again it was a beautiful Cape boating day, rain and good breeze on tap, with enough mud to justify the expense of any upmarket pair of Wellington boots purchased on a whim.

Huddled together, taking shelter from the rain under the gazebo's that were erected by the brave few, I hesitantly took my boats out of the car, expecting a long wet day, accompanied with frustration and despair, hoping that Gary had a bucket of props for me to test so as to at least get my boats to go around the beautifully set out course at least a few times, even if it was going to be at a snail's pace.

Fuelled up, radio on, all eyes focused on the Capee's boat, one, two, three pulls on the Pull Start and away we go. Wow! Now I really felt at home, no needle setting changes required, same old prop as at sea

level, and we were flying around the dam as usual, even with my F1 heavy weight which I had considered retiring for this event. “I was Ready to Race” only left very puzzled by all the hype of what it takes to get a boat to run in Johannesburg. Within an hour I had tested all three of my boats, totally satisfied that I was not just going to be participating as expected, but rather now competing for that SA Title. Totally content, I happily spent the rest of the day meeting with all the other 41 well prepared competitors, admiring the 89 boats to be raced whilst soaking up the awesome energy that was steadily building in preparation for a weekend of some serious racing.

Fridays day at the dam ended very successfully, followed by a wonderful supper for all of the National competitors present, hosted by the SAMBA committee, followed by the AGM in which the new SAMBA committee was established. After that, it was early to bed.

“Ready to Race flat-out for the coming three days”

The following three days of racing that followed will certainly be remembered in my book as one of the most awesome National Race weekends. What truly impressed me was that the level of the equipment presented, was world class, in some cases no expense spared. Boats built with such attention to detail and set up. Just about every latest boat type and performance motor and pipe combination present, showing their stuff. Amazing running gear galore, with more variable props than what I have seen in a life time. Pilots, boasting there driving skills lap after lap that would quite easily stand them in good stead at any international event.

From the start of the first race to the bitter end of the well over 100 heats that were raced in total, it was all or nothing racing, each race was a nail biting show down, drawing the constant attention of all spectating as competitors battled it out heat after heat on the water.

From the V hulls, Cats, FSRV's, Hydro's and F1 outboards, there was the competitive determination from all the competitors to take the SA Championship trophy and title home, **No one was giving up!**

In closing, I believe that all who made the effort to step up to the plate and compete in the 2010 South African National Model Boat Championship to make it what it was, were winners in their own right. All undoubtedly left much the wiser and that much the richer to be victors on another day. Due to this overall high standard of competitiveness and preparation, the resulting victory for those who lifted the 2010 South African Championship Trophy was certainly that much more meaningful and memorable.

So! Was it worth it? As my good buddy Gavin would say
"ABSOLUTELY"

A Big "Thank You" to each and every one who gave of their time and effort to have made this event the success that it was and a very special thank you to all from the Kempton Model boat club for hosting this wonderful event.

Many thanks and kind regards

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See you all in Port Elizabeth 2011 – That is if you want the SA Championship Trophy and Title

I assure you "It will be worth it "