



Sailor fishing for victory at

XXXX Sail Paradise 2012

Until two years ago Brian Aitchison had virtually never set foot on a sailboat in his 57 years. He was a fanatical fisherman who spent most of his time going after the big ones, either on the Gold Coast Broadwater or offshore.

However, in more recent times Brian has started taking an interest in the yachts that he so often saw racing around his tiny tinnie when he was out fishing. He thought it looked like fun, so two years ago he decided to give it a try.

Now he is literally hooked on sailing, so much so that he sailed his Cavalier 32, Rumba, to victory in the Performance Handicap Division on the first day of XXXX Sail Paradise, which is being staged by Southport Yacht Club off the Gold Coast.

It was a remarkable effort as this was the first major series the local sailor had ever contested.

"It just seemed to me that all the people I was watching on the sailboats were having fun, and finally I decided I had to be a part of it. Before long I found a really neat little Cavalier 32 in Brisbane, bought it and here I am. I am still very much on a steep learning curve, but i'm loving ever minute of it. I have to admit though I haven't given finishing away completely, I have a game rod and an assortment of lures stored in the cabin, ready to go anytime I get the urge to wet a line."

Today's second round of racing in XXXX Sail Paradise went into a holding pattern at 9.30am when the yachts were preparing for their start offshore. This followed the Bureau of Meteorology issuing a gale warning with gusts to 35 knots expected around lunchtime.

On hearing the forecast, Race Director Denis Thompson had no hesitation in calling on all yachts to return to Southport Yacht Club and await a decision later in the day on whether or not there would be racing.

Yesterday's results sheet saw another newcomer to the sport enjoy his first taste of victory with his new yacht. Motor racing legend Roland Dane's Jessandra II won the IRC Division from Alacrity (Matt Percy) and Black Jack Too (Peter Harburg / Mark Bradford). The Cruising Division went to Nutkin (Paul Humphreys). The undoubted highlight of the day was the spectacular performance of Sean Langman's 60ft trimaran, Team Australia which, despite blowing out a headsail, blasted its way around the 25' mile course to Coolangatta and return, taking line honours by more than one hour

Sail Paradise is sponsored by XXXX along with Gold Coast Tourism, Gold Coast City Council and Club Marine.

For more information on XXXX Sail Paradise go to the regatta website, www.sailparadise.com.au or contact Bronwen Ince at Southport Yacht Club: (07) 5591 3500.

Image caption:

Brian Aitchison aboard Rumba at Southport Yacht Club today.

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