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Brown relished the fresh conditions, despite liberal application of Duct Tape to *Ebbtide's* deck. He won by almost three minutes from Don Le Page with Richard Ineson third. Race 8 was marked by even gustier, shifty conditions. Big shifts in the gusts made for violent backwinding, so that few escaped a capsizing or a swamping. The conditions suited Don Le Page, who recorded another win over Andrew Brown who capsized at the top mark. Murray Hay and Richard Ineson crossed the line together to dead-heat for third.

The weather was still deteriorating so Race 9 was abandoned, with contestants retreating to the hospitality of the Pigeon Bay Yacht Club for the Prize Giving.

This year saw some new faces in the class. Sally Maynard, was our youngest competitor and left for Timaru immediately after prize-giving to compete in the Starling Nationals. Sally joined Belinda Andrews, Sarah Duffell and Sandra Hammond for the Women's Trophy. The B Division continued to be keenly contested and the "Thunderbirds" contested a daily trophy, awarded with suitable ceremony in the lounge of the Pigeon Bay Yacht Club.

Defending champion, class stalwart, and benchmark Russell Durrant was a notable absentee this year, with Rob Ebert (Hamilton) being the only North Island representative. Part of the problem may have been that InterIslander bookings were hard to come by this year, with both P Class, Starling and Flying Fifteen contests held around the same time.

For sailing purists, the conditions left a bit to be desired, but those who came for competitive recreational sailing and some good fun were not disappointed.

Results

Skipper	Points	Places
A Brown	6	1,1,5,1,1,2,1,2,
D Le Page	17.7	2,3,2,2,6,1,2,1,
R Ineson	47.8	3,2,4,8,3,DSQ,3,3,
W Beere	56.4	6,4,3,5,2,5,4,10
M Hay	70.8	8,8,6,3,4,6,8,3
R Ebert	85.7	4,6,8,7,10,8,5,9
D Jamieson	91.4	16,13,11,4,7,3,11,6
A Holland	92	5,5,7,9,8,15,4,10,8
W Thomas	95.7	12,12,1,6,13,10,7,DNF
G McKenzie	98	11,15,14,9,5,4,12,5
S Hammond	108	9,7,10,11,15,7,9,13
G Mantell	114	13,10,9,12,14,11,6,11
R Mackie	124	7,18,15,13,12,12,16,7
R Wenham	129	14,9,13,17,11,9,14,DNF
P Stokel	155	10,11,24,12,16,15,13,DNF
S Maynard	157	18,14,12,19,9,16,DNF,DNF
H Thomas	177	17,15,DNF,21,20,18,17,DNC
G Hammond	181	DNC,DNC,DNC,DNC,18,13,15,12
J Doidge	182	21,21,16,23,22,17,20,DNC
R Cameron	185	20,22,23,16,20,24,18,DNC
Belinda Andrews	187	24,17,22,25,21,19,DNC
S Duffell	191	DNC,DNC,17,14,17,20,DNC,DNC
Brent Andrews	191	22,19,19,20,19,23,DNF,DNC
A Aitken	192	19,DNF,17,15,23,22,DNF,DNC
G Hutt	195	23,23,21,22,24,19,21,DNC
N Richardson	205	15,20,20,DNC,DNC,DNC,DNC,DNC

Options for the 1998 National Championship

One of the suggestions put forward for the 1998 National Championship was to combine it with the Starling Championship, primarily as a means of promoting the Zephyr class. Both are Townson designs, with the Starling being intended as the transition from a P class to the Zephyr. Many current Starling skippers are unaware of the origins and attractions of the Zephyr.

As a junior class, the venue for the Starling contest is allocated by Yachting New Zealand. A zoning system operates so that families involved in P class and Starling contests are in the same area of the country. The zone for 1998 is likely to be the lower North Island, from Taupo to Wellington, including New Plymouth and Hawkes Bay. The host club is selected from those that indicate an interest to YNZ, and will be decided at the YNZ National Council Meeting on 22nd March 1997. The traditional time for Starling Contests is early to mid January. Practically speaking, we would have to approach the club chosen by YNZ to have them run our contest in association with the Starling event.

One other option is the Waikato-Thames Centreboard Regatta in Whitianga at Waitangi weekend (early February). Mercury Bay has a good reputation as a sailing venue, but it is a bit remote.

The problem we have is that the current rotation of national championships between Christchurch and French Bay places the organising demands on the same group of people every two years. One solution to this is to attempt to broaden participation in the class, thus creating more potential venues, as was possible when Zephyrs sailed at Tamaki, Waiuku and other clubs.

Another suggestion is a biennial event, but there is a risk that we could lose a bit of momentum without the focus of an annual championship.

If anyone has any other bright ideas, please let us know.