

Farr 40 Pittwater One Design Trophy, December 17-18, 2016 hosted by the Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club with racing on Pittwater & Broken Bay

Farr 40 fleet returns to Pittwater

A large Farr 40 contingent is gearing up for the second event of the 2016/17 pointscore season, the Pittwater One Design Trophy this weekend, December 17-18, 2016.

Eight Farr 40s hailing from Newcastle to Melbourne will test themselves against the vagaries of the narrow stretch of water to the north of Scotland Island on the inshore day, and in the vicinity of Broken Bay's entrance if the race committee and owners agree conditions are favourable for an offshore race course on the other day.

Opening series points went to Lang Walker's Kokomo, which took out the One Design Trophy conducted by Middle Harbour Yacht Club in October while Gordon Ketelbey's Zen secured the Corinthian trophy.

Rob Pitts' Double Black, sailing for Sandringham Yacht Club on Melbourne's Port Phillip, is one of two Victorian Farr 40s stationed in Sydney for the summer calendar. At the Sydney Short Ocean Racing Championship last month, Rio 2016 silver medallist in the 470s Will Ryan ran the tactics. For the Pittwater OD Trophy, local sailor Steve McConaghy is holding court for what will be Pitts' first outing on the challenging and picturesque courses.

"Steve's knowledge will be a huge advantage," Pitts expects. "We are committed to the season and every regatta with a very stable crew, and that makes all the difference."

On the feeling within the class in the early stages of the season he added, "I think there's a really positive buzz, quite a few Corinthian boats and the fact we've got eight for Pittwater is a great outcome. There's a real commitment from all the owners to race and perhaps the numbers are an acknowledgement by the Sydney teams of the effort and dedication to a strong class shown by the Melbourne crews."

Though Pitts says Double Black is a fully-fledged Sydney boat "by the tyranny of distance", there's plenty of state pride as they move towards their season goal, a worthy outcome at the pinnacle NSW state title and National Championship: John Calvert-Jones Trophy in February and March 2017, respectively.

Guido Belgiorino-Nettis' Transfusion returns to racing at the Pittwater Trophy, this time with a new helm and crew, barring a couple of the professionals from last season. "Guido won't be on board; it's kids only," Massimo Belgiorino-Nettis, Guido's 28 year-old son, declared.

"The boat is sitting unused so thought I'd get some experience. I'm pretty green to yachts but I've spent a lot of time in Flying 11s, 16-foot skiffs and A-cats, and I've done a couple of Farr 40 regattas. The crew are all punter mates from around the traps who have done some sailing.

We've been doing a regular twilight campaign to get everyone familiar with their roles. We haven't bent the boat... yet."

As to the heady days of Transfusion winning every Farr 40 trophy going, Massimo promises, "We won't be last unless our tactician is useless. We are not completely green; we understand the concepts though we may come unstuck in anything fresh or in a protest situation."

Also returning to the one design class for the Pittwater regatta is Joe de Kock's Good Form from Newcastle and local boat Windy Too, skippered by Carl Russett.

Racing is due to begin at 1100hrs on Saturday November 17 and 100hrs on Sunday 18, either within Pittwater or an area termed the Broken Bay offshore zone. Courses will be advised in the sailing instructions and the PRO for the Pittwater Trophy will be the Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club's trusted Steve Merrington.

Entry list:

1. Double Black – Rob Pitts
2. Estate Master – Martin Hill
3. Edake – Jeff Carter
4. Exile – Rob Reynolds
5. Good Form – Joe de Kock
6. Transfusion – Massimo Belgiorno-Nettis
7. Windy Too – Carl Russett
8. Zen – Gordon Ketelbey

By Lisa Ratcliff/Australian Farr 40 media