

## Press Release

A fine Winters afternoon with the first sailable breeze for weeks, the two Burn brothers, Declan, nearly 15 and Taylor 10 have been charging up and down the Picton harbour for the last couple of hours practicing their Gybes, tacks, downwind runs and upwind beats.

Sailing in Winter in the South Island is very fickle, there is often little wind then too much, and usually cold from the South. This and little real big fleet competition year round makes life more difficult for South Island sailors wishing to foot it with the best in Auckland, some saying it is the equivalent of "climbing Mt Cook in Jandals" to be successful in National and major regattas.

They have both been selected for New Zealand Teams competing overseas this year and have their eyes firmly fixed on a sailing career at the highest level.

Taylor is one of 5 junior NZ sailors representing NZ in the All Japan International Junior regatta at Nanao in August and the youngest NZ competitor to be sent by the Royal NZ Yacht Squadron. He is looking forward to visiting Japan, meeting the Japanese and competing against other sailors from as diverse regions as Russia, Myanmar, Vietnam and China.

He has also been picked in a team of 10 for the NZ Optimist development Team competing in the New Caledonian Sailing Champs in October. Taylor won gold for the top 10 and under sailor at this event last year but was not officially part of the team.

Declan was a member of the 2005 Team last year finishing 9th, after gear breakage and stepping on a potentially fatal Stonefish, this year he has been invited to travel with the team as mentor.

Declan is in the NZ team sailing in the ASEAN Championships in Bali in November. This will be his last event in an Optimist as he will be 15. This competition will be fierce as it is one month before the World Championships and many of the top Asian sailors will be there to sharpen up before going on to the World Champs in Uruguay.

Declan and Taylor both sail Optimist Dinghys, the International one-design junior boat and the largest class sailed worldwide. Declan also sailed a '420' double handed boat for his school, Queen Charlotte College.

He will continue to sail for his College and his fleet racing this season will be in a 'P' Class with the exception of the two International Optimist regattas.

Declan won all the major South Island events, The South Island Age groups regatta and Canterbury Optimist Championships in Christchurch and the South Island Optimist Champs in Timaru were the most important. Taylor was a very close second in the South Island Champs.

The North Island Champs saw Declan at 3rd and Taylor 46th out of 122 boats.

Declan won the Sir Peter Blake Memorial regatta in Auckland, the largest regatta over all classes held in NZ. This was Declan's first National event win and by a large margin, one he will treasure always. Travelling to Brisbane, he was 4th in the Australian Optimist Nationals a few weeks later.

The South Island regattas highlighted the differences in competition between Auckland and the South Island.

When the boys were not attending the regular Auckland sailing scene and having the benefit of the top coaches and sailors pushing each other, the differences in results showed up and the psychological edge became harder to maintain.

It is demanding to travel from Picton to Auckland by car on a Friday, compete Saturday and Sunday, drive back to Wellington by 2.00am Monday morning, catch a ferry and then be at school Monday morning, having slept virtually all the way. Maintaining good results in the boys' schoolwork is most necessary. Declan and Taylor are very aware how hard they have to work to keep their standards up, both academically and sailing wise.

The Optimist National Championships Easter in Torbay, Auckland were not as successful for Declan as planned and trained for, and some major gear failure on the race course didn't help. His final result of 23th from a fleet 182 was a still creditable effort and he knows he has many years of successful sailing ahead of him.

Taylor was 47th overall and the top 11 and under sailor and has 4 years at least in this class.

It is an honour for Declan and Taylor as South Islanders to wear the 'Silver Fern' for NZ and it is a great help to further their sailing careers. Already they have met and been coached by Olympic and America's Cup sailors who have helped inspire and motivate them with their goals.

The Boys' biggest supporters and the ones who make competitive sailing for them possible are their parents, Rob and Carolyn. They are car drivers, support boat drivers, nutritionalists, cooks, coaches, boat and rigging repairers, first aiders, helpers at the racing and yacht clubs and sponsors. They also pick up the pieces when things go wrong but reap the rewards of the joy of great days on the water, the boys sailing hard with their mates in a happy, healthy environment following the spirit of Sir Peter Blake.

Fundraising and sponsors are becoming very important for the continuing success of the Burn Brothers. There will be a major 'Garage Sale' at the Picton Marina and an auction with some major donated entries coming soon.

"Any business, organisation or person wishing to be involved, please get in touch" says Rob Burn.