

Yamaha Rollo's Marine Bridge to Bridge Water Ski Classic 2016

On the first weekend of December 2016 the New Zealand Water Ski Association held the 33rd Annual Bridge to Bridge Water Ski Classic. The weather played the game, entries were up and a huge amount of fun was had by all that attended. The Main race and time trial was dominated by the Under Seige team who broke both records and had an outstanding weekend. Mark Cromie also broke his own longstanding powerboats record which was very impressive to watch.

As far as water ski racing is concerned the event has not changed significantly over the last couple of years although in 2016 we had our largest field ever for the Powerboat Sprints and our best group of 'Open' Class boats in our Main race. However, in terms of what the event offers the public we have made progress to make a more informative, watchable and professional product for the spectator.

This year we tried something new with having the Show & Shine, our event opener and static display in Garden Place. We have previously held this in Hood Street, the Base Shopping Centre and last year in the Kingsgate Hotel Carpark and although the recipe was not perfect it was good to be back in the city but we definitely can still refine this part of the event and advertise more and bring in other elements to get more public along to this event. This is a work on that would be really good to have some help with to make it into something really cool.

One of the big highlights of the weekend for most involved was seeing the Australian team of 'Burnin' with their 2000HP Unlimited Boat that the event contributed to importing for the weekend take part in a variety of events throughout the weekend. Not only was this boat an impressive sight in its own right, the boat helped lift the local teams competitively and also helped pave the way for getting more teams to bring their boats and teams to NZ for future Bridge to Bridge events. This was definitely money well spent from the events point of view and helped market the event internationally via social media, print and word of mouth.

On the administration/management side of the event we tried a couple of different tactics this year. We employed a marketing student from Waikato University to help with the sponsorship and marketing aspects of the event. This was a huge aid to the event and myself personally and is something we will be doing again this year.

On the Sponsorship side of things it was great to have Hamilton City Council back on board with the event and as usual we received great support from the Grass Roots Trust and Lion Foundation. We also managed to add a couple of new sponsors in Good George Brewing and Hirepool – although they were 'in kind' sponsors, it was good to get contributions from new partners.

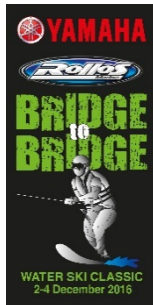
Sponsorship levels were similar to previous years across the board. Although entries increased slightly, the net effect was that the 2016 Bridge to Bridge made approximately \$5,000 (based on draft accounts prepared by the Association's accountants). This money will be reinvested in the event and used to strengthen the marketing campaign.

The event was not without its setbacks – there were 2 major ones that were totally out our control and big shocks to myself as an event organiser. Firstly was the water level – this was hugely frustrating as was something I spent quite a bit of time discussing with Mercury Energy and they made promises that they simply didn't keep. I apologise for the damage and difficulties caused but this was not something we could help as they promised one thing and delivered the opposite.

Hopefully with an earlier event date this year it may help this issue. The other setback was something I hope I never have to encounter again – this was the discovery of a dead body of a member of the public on the river banks on the Sunday morning of the event. This absolutely blew me away and something I never thought I would have to deal with. I really think we owe Emma Nasimi a great deal as she single handily dealt with the situation, dealing with the police etc and ensured that we did actually get to go racing as there was a very real risk that we weren't going to be able to. Thanks to Ems for this and her efforts as race controller for the whole weekend.

In summary, the event was a huge success, not only on the balance sheet but on the water and for our sponsors. The investment over the past years is starting to pay dividends as the public realise this is an annual event which has more to offer than just water skiing racing. We already have an unprecedented amount of interest for this year's event and hope that we will be able to host another event which is great for Hamilton as a whole, and shows the world what a great city we have.

The 2017 Yamaha Rollos Marine Bridge to Bridge is on the 11/12 of November.



Yours sincerely

Brad Dutton
Chairperson
2016 Bridge to Bridge Committee
New Zealand Water Ski Association