



# Cutter holds course for trophy



WHITSUNDAY Sailing Club sports boat skipper Shannon Hart has continued to give notice that his Mustard Cutter crew will be a major medal contender in the Meridien Marinas International Airlie Beach Race Week from August 9-16.

Skipper Hart and crew produced another impressive light wind performance on Pioneer Bay last week to wrap up their second line and corrected time win and seal a vice type grip on the Abel Point Yacht Sales trophy.

Mustard Cutter was simply unmatched for speed, particularly on the free sheet sailing angles where both skipper and crew combined to put time in the bank to outpace their high .865 rating.

They eventually completed the course in 51 minutes 17 seconds and progressively eliminated their major rivals from beating their 44 minute 22 second handicap corrected time by

recording a massive 5 minute 23 second line honours victory over the John Galloway skippered Queensland Marine Services while Sandpiper (Colin Pruden) was another 42 seconds off the pace.

Sure, the lightweight Thompson 7 sports boat held a decided speed advantage in the variable 10 knot breeze but the tactical options and sail handling skills contributed by her crew proved the difference in what was arguably their best result of the year.

Mustard Cutter enters this week's trophy deciding final with a 1-4-1 score and a commanding three point lead over Queensland Marine Services 2-1-6 while veteran skipper Harold Menelaus has progressively improved in Treasure to hold third with a 6-3-2 score.

The present form suggests Mustard Cutter will be a short priced favourite

to win the trophy in final but Shannon Hart will need to be tactically aware to race free of any rule infringements to claim a deserved win in the competitive Division 2 series.

Roger Boast will face a similar tactical environment when Sunflower contests the Division 3 trophy final over the same course.

But the Sunflower crew has been more consistent, recording a 3-1-2 (pts) to hold a decided advantage with a five point lead over their nearest rivals David Hardman in Linga Longa 1-7-3 and Peter Mitchelson in Lorna Rose Too 4-6-1 who share second place on 11 points.

A top four finish will be a priority when the Sunflower crew prepares their final race strategy while the Linga Longa and Lorna Rose Too combinations are expected to become engaged in a boat on boat tactical dog-fight to decide the minor places.