

JOHN CUNEO

John Cuneo was the first Queenslander to win a Gold Medal in Olympic Yachting at Kiel in 1972. In 1974, he was designated as helmsman of Southern Cross in the America's Cup challenge. At the last moment, he was replaced but sailed as tactician in the 3rd and 4th heats, making him the only Queenslander to have ever competed at the Olympics and in an America's Cup.

His impressive sailing record is unequalled by any other Queenslander. In all he has won over 60 major yachting championships in 8 different classes, spanning 50 years.

John moved to Brisbane from Sydney at 6 years of age. At age 7 he had his first sail. Following in the footsteps of his grandfather Thomas Cuneo (who won the 18 foot skiff Intercolonial Championship 1898 - 1899), John vigorously pursued his love of sailing and his dream to excel competitively.

Educated at Ascot State School and Church of England Grammar School, John went on to study Optometry. He graduated in 1949 and gained the highest pass in Queensland in his final year examination. John went into private practice in Brisbane in 1951, and retired from this practice in 1991.

He won his first Queensland championship in the Trainee Dinghies in 1947. He was National Champion in the 12 square meter Sharpie Class in 1956, 58 and 60 and in the Lightweight Sharpie class in years 1961, 62, 64 and 65. In 1966 he moved into the International 505 class to compete in the World series in Adelaide. Without prior competition in the class, he won the Australian Championship which preceded the World series. He went on to finish 3rd in the Worlds.

Moving into the International Dragon class, he won the Australian Championship in 1967 - 68, and was selected for the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico. A fifth place here was seen by many as an outstanding performance, but John was unhappy with it. It was at this time that he set himself a four year goal to win selection for the Munich games in 1972 and to prove himself the best in the world.

On the way to achieving this goal, he won the English Speaking Union Dragon Championship, and the Australian Dragon Championship in Brisbane in 1969. Following this he went to Majorca (Spain) to narrowly miss taking out the World Championship by one point.

The selection races for the 1972 Olympics almost saw his dream slip away, as his performance was affected by a debilitating bowel infection. Weakened and in pain, he fought back from third midway through the series to win by 0.6 points.

At the Olympic Games held in Kiel (Germany) in 1972, John dominated the first three races of the Dragon class, winning all three. In the fourth, though he finished 19th, his opponents, who were aware that another win would have sealed the title, gave him little room.

He went on to win the Gold, 28 points ahead of the East German second place getter.

John's commitment to sailing was demonstrated equally out of the water. His boat preparation was exemplary, and always he strived to have the best prepared racing boat in the fleet. He is known in yachting circles as "Mr Millimetre".

John was Australian Yachtsman of the Year in 1968 and in 1972 Queensland Sportsman of the Year, and winner of the Lindy Award.

In more recent years, John won the Queensland Etchells championship in 1982 and was the winner of the inaugural Australian Yachting Masters Regatta in Albany W.A. in 1991. He was elected by his peers to the Australian Sports Hall of Fame in 1988.

His contribution to the administration of the sport and the assistance given to his fellow and future yachtspersons has been outstanding. (See list attached). He is a former President of the Queensland Yachting Association and former Vice President of the Australian Yachting Association. He is also a foundation member of the Wyuna Syndicate which supports Olympic Yachtspersons who are members of the Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron and a Foundation Member of the International Yachting Foundation which helps to supply yachts, equipment and money for Olympic competitors' training and travel expenses.

He was the Assistant Coach for the Anglican Church Grammar School Team Racing Squad and has given many lectures on various yachting subjects to help junior sailing.

YACHTING RACE RECORDS:

1. International Events

- Olympic Gold Medallist Dragon Class Kiel (1972)
- English Speaking Union International Championship for Dragon Class, Yachts, 1st place, (1969)
- World Championship for International Dragon Class Spain, 2nd Place, (1969)
- World Championship for International 505 Class, 3rd Place, (1966)
- Olympic Games in Acapulco, Mexico Olympics, 5th Place, (1968)
- Tactician of Australian 12 metre Southern Cross in Americas Cup, (1974)
- Member of three Olympic Yachting teams (1968, 1972 and 1980)
- Australian representative in International Regattas eleven times

2. Interstate Events

- Australian Champion 12 square metre Sharpie class three times (1955-56, 1957-58, 1959-60)
- Australian Champion Lightweight Sharpie Class four times (1960-61, 1961-62, 1963-64, 1964-65)
- Australian Champion International 505 Class (1965-66)
- Australian Champion International Dragon Class, (1967-68, 1969-70)
- Winner of Inaugural Australian Yachting Masters Regatta in Albany, W.A. (1990)
- Total of eleven National Championships won in five different classes
- Winner of Australian Olympic Selection Trials and Olympic Yachting representative, (1968 & 1972)
- Queensland representative in Interstate Regattas 27 times
- Won Inaugural Australian Yachting Masters Regatta in Albany, W.A. (1991)

3. Queensland Championships

- Trainee dinghies (1947-48)
- Australian 12 square metre Sharpie Class (1949-59)
- Australian Lightweight Sharpie Class (1960-65)
- International Dragon Class (1967-68, 1969-70 and 1971-72)
- Head of Brisbane River (1963)
- Head of the Bay (1959 & 62)
- Etchells (1986)

4. Club and other Championships

- Numerous in five classes

ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS HELD IN YACHTING

President Queensland 12 square metre Sharpie Association (1957-59)
President Queensland Lightweight Sharpie Association (1960-65)
President Australian Lightweight Sharpie Association (1962-63)
President Queensland Yachting Association (1962-63)
Vice President Australian Yachting Federation (1963-64)
Member Sailing Committee Royal Queensland Yacht Club (1952-53)
Member General Committee Royal Queensland Yacht Club (1953-54, 1980-81)
Member Sailing Committee Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron (1976-79)
Member Organising Committee International Finn Class, Gold Cup (World Championship) (1976)
Officer of the Day Finn Class Gold Cup (World Championship) (1976)
Member Australian Yachting Inshore Committee which sets policy for small boat sailing in Australia (1979-80)
President of Wright Intermediate Class Association (Junior Sailing) (1978-79)
Member Brisbane River Committee to run Aquatic Regattas for the Commonwealth Games (1980)
State Selector for Youth Sail (National Youth Championships) (1979)
Official Starter for the Finn Gold Cup (World Championship) (1976)
Official Starter for the Pre-Olympic Selection Regatta (1991)
Official Starter for the Olympic Selection Regatta (1992)
Official Starter for the National 505 Championships (1993)

MAJOR LECTURES DELIVERED

Queensland Yachting Association lectures in Townsville and Gladstone (1971)
Queensland Youth Sail (1977)
Australian National Youth Sail, Canberra (1978)
Sail Fast Seminar (1979)
Chairman and Lecturer for Seminar for the Pre-Olympic Team, Sydney (1979)
Group Leader C.A.S.C.A. Sports Forum, Brisbane (1979)

HELP GIVEN TO PREPARE AUSTRALIAN OLYMPIC YACHTING TEAM

Olympic Yachting Coach (1979-80)
Member of the Olympic Yachting Preparation Group (1979-80)
Selector Olympic team (1980)
Pre-Olympic Coach with Australian Team on European Tour to Tallin (Russia) (1979)
Delegate of the Australian Yachting Federation to the Australian Olympic Federation Justification Meeting (1980)
Member of the Organising Committee for the Olympic Classes Regatta in Brisbane (largest regatta ever held in Brisbane) (1979)
Officer of the Day for the Olympic Classes Regatta (1979)
Official Starter for the Pre-Olympic Selection Races held at Manly (1991 & 1992 respectively)

AWARDS

Australian Yachtsman of the Year (1968)

Australian Lindy Award (1972)

Queensland Sportsman of the Year (1972)

Queens Silver Jubilee Medal (1977)

Order of Merit Award, Queensland Olympic Council (1986)

Sports Australia Hall of Fame Induction (1988)

The Australian Sports Medal (2000)

Life Member Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron

Life Member Australian Lightweight Sharpie Association

Life Member Queensland Lightweight Sharpie Association

JOHN CUNEO (QLD) 1928 –

Year	Race	Place	Yacht
1936	First sailed at age 7		
1948	Trainee Dinghies Queensland Championship	First	Stella
1949	12 sq metre Sharpie Class Queensland Championship	First	Furore
1956	12 sq metre Sharpie Class Australian Championship	First	Daring
1958	12 sq metre Sharpie Class Australian Championship	First	Daring
1959	Head of The Bay	First	Daring
1960	12 sq metre Sharpie Class Australian Championship	First	Daring
1961	Lightweight Sharpie Class Australian Championship	First	Daring II <i>- HOBART</i>
1962	Head of The Bay	First	Daring II
1962	Lightweight Sharpie Class Queensland Championship	First	Daring II
1962	Lightweight Sharpie Class Australian Championship	First	Daring II
1963	Lightweight Sharpie Class Queensland Championship	First	Daring II
1963	Head of Brisbane River	First	Daring II
1964	Lightweight Sharpie Class Queensland Championship	First	Daring II
1964	Lightweight Sharpie Class Australian Championship	First	Daring II
1965	Lightweight Sharpie Class Queensland Championship	First	Daring II
1965	Lightweight Sharpie Class Australian Championship	First	Daring II
1966	International 505 Class Australian Championship	First	Daring Kestrel
1966	International 505 Class World Championship	Third	Daring Kestrel
1968	International Dragon Class Queensland Championship	First	Jock Robbie
1968	International Dragon Class Australian Championship	First	Jock Robbie
1968	International Dragon Class Olympic Selection Trials	First	Jock Robbie
1968	International Dragon Class Olympics	Fifth	Jock Robbie
1968	Australian Yachtsman of The Year		
1969	International Dragon Class World Championship	Second	Jennifer
1969	English Speaking Union Championship for Dragon Class	First	Cynthia
1970	International Dragon Class Queensland Championship	First	Cynthia
1970	International Dragon Class Australian Championship	First	Cynthia
1972	International Dragon Class Queensland Championship	First	Wyuna
1972	International Dragon Class Olympic Selection Trials	First	Wyuna
1972	International Dragon Class Olympics (Gold Medal)	First	Wyuna
1972	Australian Lindy Award		
1972	Queensland Sportsman of The Year		
1974	Tactician 12 Metre Australian America's Cup Challenge	Second	Southern Cross
1977	Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal		
1986	Etchell Class Queensland Championship	First	Sox
1986	Order of Merit Award Queensland Olympic Council		
1988	Sports Hall of Fame Induction		
1991	Australian Yachting Master Regatta Albany WA	First	Rainbow Coast
2000	The Australian Sports Medal		

1948 – 1986

6 different classes of Yachts

38 years of Sailing

Club Memberships

Life Member Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron
 Life Member Australian Lightweight Sharpie Association
 Life Member Queensland Lightweight Sharpie Association
 Little Ship Club
 Patron Queensland International Dragon Class