

*Estrellita*, finding light weather and small sail a futile combination, made obvious the loss of her title by dropping back to last.

*Ajax* still looked a certain winner on the third run to Cremorne, rounding a minute and a quarter ahead of *Toogara II*, with *Viking* holding 3rd place.

*Return* was fourth then, while *Query* provided another good downwind performance to take 5th position. *Desire* was next, followed by *Vortex*, *Yandoo*, *Estrellita* and *Mystic*.

The breeze lightened for the final work back to Shark Island, and for the first time in an uneven race there appeared a glimmer of uncertainty.

*Toogara II*, moving well under her light crew of three hands, slowly began to decrease the gap. Barnett soon grew concerned about his approaching rival, particularly when he noticed his covering tacks were further reducing his lead on the fast-staying Double Bay boat. It was here that Barnett made his big mistake.

Worried about being drawn into a close-quarters tacking match, he chose to avoid staying as much as possible, even at the cost of leaving his opponent uncovered. In a matter of minutes *Toogara II* had pressed home the advantage of a slightly better breeze to take



Defending champion "*Estrellita*" (Qld.) never struck form, lost her only chance of scoring by capsizing in last heat, while nearing Shark Island mark in 3rd position.

up the lead. From then on, despite Barnett's attempts to outsail his rival, it was obvious he was beaten.

With the bit between her teeth, *Toogara II* made no mistakes, rounding Shark Island for the short run to the finish exactly one minute ahead of the Greenwich champion.

*Ajax* closed up on the run to the finish, flagged in 35 seconds behind *Toogara II*, with *Viking* in 3rd place, 2 mins. 23 secs. further astern. *Desire* was 4th, followed by *Vortex*, *Estrellita*, *Yandoo* and *Mystic*. However, *Viking* missed third points as the outcome of a protest by the skipper of *Vortex*; the latter was in turn disqualified after the hearing of a Sailing Committee protest for a breach of the port-and-starboard rule.

### "AJAX" AGAIN

ONLY two boats—*Ajax* and *Toogara II*— were in the running for the title as skiffs lined up for the final heat. Each had scored 22 points from a win and a 2nd; *Return* and *Vortex* were sharing 3rd position with 3 points, while *Query* was the only other scorer so far, with 2 points from two 4ths.

A fresh nor'easter brought most boats to the line with small sails, although *Query*, *Yandoo*, *Vortex*, *Return* and *Desire* carried intermediates.

*Ajax* and *Toogara II* both carried third suits, but Barnett elected to lighten his crew by sailing three-handed.

To the great delight of spectators these two boats were served equally at the start and, together with *Query*, soon battled at close quarters for supremacy.

*Query* was doing slightly better with her intermediate gear, and at Taylor Bay held a 15-second advantage from *Toogara II*, with *Ajax* a boat-length behind in 3rd position.

The remainder of the work to Sow and Pigs produced a great battle between the three leaders, *Query* holding a slight lead, with *Ajax* and *Toogara II* continually replacing one another in second position.

*Estrellita* and *Yandoo* were next best, sailing well up the eastern channel in 4th and 5th place respectively; then followed *Viking*, *Return*, *Vortex* and *Mystic*.

*Ajax* chose a better leg at Watsons Bay, to edge *Query* out of first place for the Sow and Pigs rounding. *Toogara II* was 3rd, a few seconds behind *Query*, while *Estrellita* and *Yandoo* closed up on the tails of the leaders.

Ringtail trouble nearly sent *Query* under as the skiffs approached the reef, but she survived an unhappy few moments at the cost of losing 2nd place to *Toogara II*.

*Ajax*, moving well with her light crew, soon established a handy lead, while *Toogara II* proved too slow for *Query*, who began to fly under her bigger spread of canvas. *Yandoo* was unlucky for the third time, capsizing on the reef.

*Estrellita* showed off her speed lines for the first time in the series by taking up 3rd place, well within striking distance of the leaders. *Toogara II* fell back to 4th, still well ahead of *Viking*, *Return* and *Mystic*, who rounded in that order.

Approaching the Shark Island gybe, *Estrellita* lost her chance of a comeback by capsizing in a sudden squall. *Query*, continuing her downwind dash, passed *Ajax* to take a 10-second command at the buoy.

The shy run to Clarke Island saw little change other than the disappearance of *Vortex* and *Desire*, whose crews sampled a Sydney Harbor ducking in quick succession.

*Query* rounded Clarke 20 seconds ahead of *Ajax*, with *Toogara II* about 1 min. 30 secs. further back in 3rd place. *Query* soon lost the advantage, however, when she was forced to leave *Ajax* while adjusting an incorrectly-hoisted jib halyard. From then on Barnett did not look back.

*Ajax* moved well ahead on the work to Chowder Head, rounding 1 m. 43 s. ahead of *Query*, with *Toogara II* still in 3rd place.

There was little alteration in positions on the two shy runs to the finish, *Ajax* taking her second gun for the series by 1 m. 45 s. from *Query*, with *Toogara II* 2 m. 45 s. away in 3rd place. Then came *Viking*, *Return* and *Mystic*—the only other skiffs to finish.

Thus New South Wales won her eleventh National Title, and made good her prospects for another at the 1953-54 carnival—Brisbane River permitting.

### FINAL SCORE CARD

SKIFF	SKIPPER	CLUB	STATE	PTS.
<i>Ajax</i>	D. Barnett	Greenwich	N.S.W.	37
<i>Toogara II</i>	C. Monkhouse	Double Bay	N.S.W.	25
<i>Query</i>	C. Ryrie	Double Bay	N.S.W.	9
<i>Return</i>	K. Martin	Brisbane	Qld.	3
<i>Desire</i>	G. Collins	Brisbane	Qld.	3
<i>Viking</i>	K. Barrett	Lane Cove	N.S.W.	1

Scoring method for each heat: 1st, 15 points; 2nd, 7; 3rd, 3; 4th, 1.