



WELCOME to our first Sports Road test! Simon and I have made a commitment to not just write about sport, but also to participate in as many sports as possible. For the first week I went Radio Controlled Yacht Racing at the Marina with Gladstone's local club. If you want to challenge us or give us a go, send us an email at [sport@gladstoneobserver.com.au](mailto:sport@gladstoneobserver.com.au)

# Sailing on radio airwaves

SAILING is enjoyed in many forms around the world and Gladstone's beautiful harbour is ideal for the pursuit of the sport, including the lesser-known radio-controlled yacht racing.

My first impression was sheer curiosity. Eight small sailboats whizzing around the marina with their focussed owners controlling their movements from the shore.

A tape was counting in the background and seeing I was clearly puzzled the club members explained they were just starting a handicap race, with the tape counting the seconds passed since the first racer left. Slowly, I was beginning to understand.

The next impression was surprise. Firstly, at how fast they can sail, and next, that they aren't exactly that small.

Made to an international standard size, the yachts are a metre in length and are powered entirely by wind.

This form of racing has been practised in Gladstone for years, but it is only since early 2005 that the club has really started to pick up and now has 16 members.

Founding member Grant Cooper said he and Chris Struik became involved in the sport after discussions about how much they missed sailing. So they purchased a couple of second-hand



Observer sports reporter Liam Butterworth with 'Jet Fish' on February 1 at the Gladstone Radio Controlled Yacht Club's first regatta for 2009. Picture by CHRISSY HARRIS liam010209-3

radio-controlled yachts and within a year the club was born.

Between races club secretary Cooper gave me the opportunity to sail his yacht 'Jet Fish' to find out more about the sport.

I was surprised to find that sailing the yacht wasn't that difficult, although I wasn't racing.

There are two knobs on the control, one to steer the rudder and another to change the boom.

I'm told sailing a radio-controlled yacht is exactly the same as a full size one, but I'll take their word for it.

It is also seriously good fun. And addictive. The yachts pick up some good speed despite their small size.

Cooper says it costs about \$1000 to get a second-hand yacht and control, and that there are few secondary costs involved.

The Gladstone club is always looking for new members and can be found most Sunday afternoons at the marina.

They have a website with news and information about RC yacht racing and the club itself. It is updated regularly.

For more information about the Gladstone RC yacht club see [www.rcyachts.com.au](http://www.rcyachts.com.au) or contact 0419 779 363.