

Minna wins by whisker

THE South Australian sloop Minna yesterday won the 500-mile Melbourne - Hobart yacht race by just over a boat's length.

The yacht, a Cole 43, crossed the finishing line 1 min. 12 sec. ahead of the 59ft. Victorian sloop Banjo Paterson.

Over the last 1000 metres of the West Coaster race, Minna made up 250 metres on Banjo Paterson.

Minna, skippered by Jack Williams of Adelaide, cut 1 hr., 17 min., 13 sec. off the race re-

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cord set in 1972 by Mary Blair.

The provisional winner on handicap was 37ft. sloop, Pagan, skippered by Reg Hare, of Victoria.

Banjo Paterson was the first into the Derwent River, but Minna, which led the fleet for most of the race, caught it at O'Possum Bay.

Minna made a long, desperate tack towards the finishing line, crossed Banjo Paterson by little more than a boat's length, and held enough wind to win.

The skipper of Banjo Paterson, John Jarrett, said the last few miles "was a typical Derwent situation."

"First there was wind — then there was none at all," he said.

The first eight yachts across the line were Minna, Banjo Paterson, Mary Blair, Jisuma, Winston Churchill, Wendy Two, Four Winds and Tawarri II.

Second on handicap was the Hobart yacht Astrolabe, skippered by the commodore of the Derwent Sailing Squadron, Bob Gear.

Provisional third on handicap was Pajen sailed by the Short family of Williamstown.

• Tamboo, skippered by Bob Green of Sandringham Yacht Club won the Melbourne-Devonport race on handicap.

Second was another Sandringham boat, Vandal, and third was the Tasmanian yacht Dragonfly.

First over the line was Westwind, from the Port Dalrymple (Tas.) club.

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• Banjo Paterson skipper John Jarrett (left) and Minna skipper Jack Williams after the Melbourne-Hobart yacht race.