

**Event:** Formula Windsurfing Oceanic's & Australian Nationals + Slalom Nationals 2007  
**Venue:** South Beach, Fremantle, Perth, Western Australia.  
**Dates:** 06-10 Jan.2007  
**Organizer:** Windsurfing WA & AWA (Australian Windsurfing Association)

Report from an interstate competitor.....

A good contingent of East coast and offshore competitors took full advantage of the opportunity to return to the windsurfing Mecca's of WA. After dreading the counter police at both Virgin and Qantas domestic, I have to admit that flying interstate with a lot of equipment was completely painless and certainly not worth losing sleep over (as most of us did?). FYI airlines will be charging a set fee for each piece of sporting equipment soon. Perth on arrival was hot and windy – shock horror....The typical Fremantle doctor was blowing SW 25knots, with a very steep chop. Being the day before the event I expected to see a lot of guys out testing the location, and I wasn't disappointed. Pro's like Peter Volwater and Nick Baker 2 sail testing the latest North slalom kit, Jesper Orth on New Code Reds and Isonics, Jester Vesterstrom (1<sup>st</sup> event back from injury), Sean O'Brien (current FW Aussie Champ) it was obvious this was going to be a competitive field.

The bad news was for Nathan Bowness who after 4 days of driving from NSW to WA, proved that his 6'5", 100kg body is a little more than the average aluminum booms could cope with when it snapped, spearing him in the shin (photos may still be on [www.storm-riders.com.au](http://www.storm-riders.com.au)). This was to be the beginning of the boom failure Bowness nightmare as Bowness Senior broke another 2 booms during the event.

### **Sat, 06Jan07**

#### **SW sea breeze, 20-30knots**

With the forecast predicting exactly the same conditions as yesterday, the decision was made to concentrate on Slalom. The course comprised of a 4 gybe downwind course, starting and finishing just off the beach, with the groyne providing perfect viewing for the spectators of the 2<sup>nd</sup> gybe. Heats of 8 competitors would be run until a final heat determined the top 8 places for the table. As many tables as practical would be run.

The wind arrived a couple of hours later and in less force than predicted but was above the minimum constant 15knot minimum to get racing underway.

Table 1 felt like a practice for most of us. Getting used to full on slalom was a bit of a shock to the system, but the top armatures and Pros never missed a beat and easily dominated the top eight positions going into the final race of table one. Jesper Vesterstrom (DEN-111) appeared to win the final, but was subsequently DSQ for being over early. Peter Volwater (HOL-24), Jesper Orth (AUS-10) and Rowan Law especially had a great race to take the top 3 positions. Steve Stratford's 5<sup>th</sup> was also a great effort against such a classy fleet

Table 2 was started immediately in a slightly stronger breeze of 17-18 knots. Jesper Vesterstrom made amends for table 1 with a 1<sup>st</sup> place, followed by Volwater, Orth and the current GPS speed record holder of Chris Lockwood (AUS-74).

### **Sun, 07Jan07**

#### **10-15knot SW increasing to 20-25knots.**

With perfect Formula conditions predicted the start time was set at 11am. The wind was a little late arriving, but by 1pm the 1<sup>st</sup> race was away in 17knots, fading away to 12knots by the finish. The course was a double windward return starting and finishing 20meters of the end of the groyne. Fantastic for beach goers and supporters to witness the racing while sitting on dry land knocking back champs (no names mentioned – Brenda). Current Aussie champ Sean O'Brien (AUS-120) picked up a bullet after Vesterstrom made a rookie mistake of not signing on. Ex Aussie national champ, Mike Nelson (AUS-12) announce his intentions with a good 2<sup>nd</sup>, followed by the unknown WA quantity of Orth on some nice looking Severn sails.

Race2 was away right on schedule. Condition has stabilized at 13-14 knots with a small amount of ribbon weed making an appearance at the top mark. Vesterstrom reminded everyone why he is currently the #1 ranked

formula windsurfer in the world with a convincing win in the perfect conditions. O'Brien and another ex national champ, Sam Parker (AUS-3) made his move with the minor placings.

Race3 was conducted immediately to avoid the inevitable weed, which was fast invading the course area. The weed became unavoidable at the top mark, which actually became a very interesting strategic situation. Basically every competitor had to decide how much weed to trail and for how long before clearing his fin. Vesterstrom, O'Brien took the top 2 places, with Magne Fronsdaale (NOR-4) showing some great local knowledge to take a well deserved 3<sup>rd</sup> on a weed fin. Racing called for the rest of the day.

Free official drinks were offered at the Harbour Side bar in Fremantle that evening. I didn't attend, but judging by the look of Orth, O'Brien and Parker the free drinks were taken full advantage of.

### **Mon, 08Jan07**

#### **10-15knot SW, increasing to 20-25knots in afternoon.**

Perfect Formula conditions! 3 x 13minute races on the same course as yesterday. Vesterstrom continued to dominate with 3 relatively easy wins. O'Brien picked up a couple of 2nds. Fronsdaale broke a mast in the 1<sup>st</sup> race, but came back strong, proving that the previous day was no fluke. The 2 grand masters made their moves also with Wayne Bowness (AUS-98) and Rick Murray (AUS-4) starting to close on the top guys.

The switch to slalom was made with the wind increasing (as predicted). Same course as day 1 was used, but the results of table 3 definitely made interesting reading, with Orth winning, O'Brien showing that he is not just a Formula specialist in 2<sup>nd</sup> and Fronsdaale coming in 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Table4. With everyone having a drop up their sleeves now, there would be no holding back for the last table of the day. Strangely, the wind dropped below the 15knot minimum so the race committee made an excellent decision to put the racing on hold, even though the bulk of competitors were convinced the wind has shut down for the day. Sure enough 1hour later the wind returned to give us the best slalom conditions of the event. 20-22 knots of super clean wind and water. Volwater had a great race with Vesterstrom finishing just behind him after spending the entire race just meters behind him. Orth took 3<sup>rd</sup> and Lockwood continued his domination of 4<sup>th</sup> spot.

With dusk approaching there was time for a final all in race to the finish which would count for a table result. Unfortunately General recalls and fleet slalom racing don't really go together and the committee was forced to abandon the race before shark feeding time.

After such fantastic conditions, it was inevitable that the forecast would fade for more slalom racing, and this was to prove to be the last Slalom racing of the event.

Final results are on the [www.storm-riders.com.au](http://www.storm-riders.com.au), but Peter Volwater, Jesper Orth and Jesper Vesterstrom proved to everyone that the Pro's are exactly that when it comes to racing and were popular winners.

### **Tue, 09Jan07**

#### **5-15knot S, increasing to 20-25knot W.**

South Beach was ruled out as a location due to very unusual directly on shore winds and enormous amounts of weed in the shore break. Racing was transferred to The Swan River. We were immediately greeted with nice 14knot winds, flat water with dolphins (not sharks) frolicking just off the beach. Formula racing was scheduled immediately, and by the time we hit the start line for race 7 the wind was already up to 20knots. After a quick 10min race the race committee made another excellent decision to send the fleet ashore to change gear instead the scheduled back to back race. Everyone changed to their smallest sail and fins for the next 3 races which were all held in fantastic conditions. Anyone who has not raced Formula in 25knot, with flat water would have trouble imagining how much fun it can be. Anyway, Vesterstrom killed it, but the minor placers were well mixed with O'Brien, Parker, Nelson, Orth and myself having really closing racing, often coming down to the last 50meters to establish finishing position. Wayne Bowness continued the family tradition of breaking booms, while Steve Stratford accepted a row of DSQ after breaking his mast early but choosing to try course racing on a slalom board instead of watching from the beach. FYI his results were surprisingly good.....

### **Wed, 10Jan07**

#### **20-25knot W.**

A maximum of 2 Formula races were scheduled for the last day. After discovering how sweat Swan River was to sail on, we were excited to get back out there. Vesterstrom didn't need to race the last day as he already had

the Oceanic's well and truly wrapped up, but did it on the 66cm RSX fin to see how it would perform. This was to be Orth's day though with him sailing really well (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>) giving him enough points to secure 3<sup>rd</sup> place over Parker who had a relative shocker after playing bumper boats with the steel start boat in both races. O'Brien finished a well deserved 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Oceanic and retained his Australian Formula Windsurfing Title for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year on the trot.

After 5 days of racing including 4 full Slalom tables and 12 Formula races the Prize Giving dinner and presentation was held at the famous "Left Bank" in Fremantle. Steve Stratford had personally made up some kick-ass trophies that were presented to all of the winners.

On behalf of all the competitors and supporters of the event, I cannot thank the organizers (Windsurfing WA), specifically Dan Engle, Ian Gross & Ian Fox for making it all happen. The sponsors especially AUSWIND & Flying Objects, volunteers (I wish I know all their names, but there were too many to keep track of and I know I would offend someone by not mentioning them and last but not least the Race officials (OD: Tom Mackel and Triha Upton who traveled over from NSW, Doug and many others).

Great Conditions, Great Racing, Great atmosphere and Great people....Kinda what windsurfing is all about really.....

Next Formula Nationals will be at Redcliff, Brisbane, Queensland approx 22-25Jan2008.

All GPS Formula races can be watch on [www.storm-riders.com.au](http://www.storm-riders.com.au) (thanks to John O'Brien)

Brett Morris  
AUS-080

## Slalom Course:

