

2014 RACEBOARD OCEANICS

Day 4

Posted on Jan 28, 2014



Dark clouds over the eastern horizon gave some concern whether the north easterly sea breeze would kick in for the final day of the 2014 Raceboard Oceanics. The wind slowly built over the day providing an excellent variety in the races. A light wind in the correct direction set in early, and a windward-return course with a central, downwind gibe mark was set. The course was set in the open expanse of Botany Bay to ensure the cleanest wind. Big sails were rigged by all for the first race.

A beautiful, easy planning wind brought sailors out into Botany Bay for the start. The wind held in for the first upwind which saw Leo Sharpe round first, followed by a tight trio of Rhys Herbert, Keith Single and Ben Morrell. The wind then dropped off to become quite light, not quite enough to plane on the downwind. Slight spurts of planning before the wind completely dropped off pushed Leo and Ben out in-front. Ben was able to gain on Leo in the upwind with what was becoming a patchy and shifty wind. Leo was able to hold his advantage in the downwind to finish in first, followed by Ben. Behind, the change to light conditions saw a significant mixing of positions, as those preferring the heavy winds fell behind those who prefer lighter winds. This saw Rhys and Keith drop back, and Richie Reynolds catch up to his close competition in the Grand Masters, Simon Fyfe. The pair rounded the bottom mark together and in a frantic battle to pump to the line Richie found himself with nothing to pull against and went backwards into the drink. This left Simon to finish in third, followed by James who took the opportunity to pass Richie, who eventually finished in fifth.

Wind shifted and increased for race 2, but was still up and down in patches and shifting around. Picking the right place to be on the water gave large advantage in the racing. Ben Morrell was able to find pressure and angle on the first upwind to be the first to round, closely followed by Leo. Downwind there was still not quite enough to plane comfortably at a deep angle, making the downwind leg hard work, pumping all the way. Doing so, Ben was able to hold advantage, and continue with a strong upwind to take the win over Leo in second. James recovered from being down in tenth round the top mark on the second lap to pump hard downwind in an impressive display, taking third. Brendan Moore, enjoying the stronger wind, sailed well to finish in fourth. The tight battle for the grand Masters title continued, with Simon again just beating Richie, in fifth and sixth respectively.

A lunch break between races 2 and 3 allowed the wind to build. This saw competitors trying to predict what the wind would do from shore, and deliberating over whether to change down sails. In the end there was a mix of sailors taking out high wind sails, and those opting to keep their large raceboard sails. The wind had indeed built, and gave rise to similar battles as was seen on the first two days. In race 3 Leo completed the first lap in the lead, followed by Rhys and Ben and hotly pursued by James. James then overtook Rhys and Ben on the second lap, again with exemplary downwind technique. Ben was able to overtake Rhys in the

upwind, but lost the position in Rhys' preferred section of the course, planning downwind. The finish order was Leo, James, Rhys and Ben. Simon finished in fifth to firm his position for the Grand Masters.

The wind increased further for the final race of the championships, with conditions suitable to have the maximum 4 races in a day. The higher wind suited those who had decided to change down sails at lunch, bringing them into contention. After a messy start, with boards compressed on the pin end, Leo and James came to the front on the first lap. Brendan Moore and Glen Morrell were the next two boards with their higher wind sails coming into their own. Leo and James pulled away from the opposition in the second lap and rounded the final mark neck and neck, James gibing inside of Leo. In the crosswind blast to the finish Leo was able to just hold off James and take a dramatic win. Glen had his best race of the event, finishing strongly in third, followed by Brendan in fourth. Colin McCall also had his best result of the event, comfortably getting around the course on his high wind sail and taking fifth.

After what turned out to be a fantastic and varied 13 races over four days of racing, competitors were well and truly fatigued. The complete range of conditions that were experienced meant that the winners were a true indication of the best all round sailors at the event. The competition was tight, with many categories and battles for overall position coming down the results in the final day of racing and the dynamics of the second drop.

The overall standings were - [FINAL RESULTS](#)

1st – Leo Sharpe

2nd – James Grunfelder

3rd – Benjamin Morrell

4th – Simon Fyfe

5th – Richie Reynolds

1st Lady – Lisa McMillan

Awards presented in age categories

1st Senior (under 35) – James Grunfelder

1st Master – Leo Sharpe

1st Grand Master – Simon Fyfe

1st Veteran – Martin Thearle

The Australian championships were run concurrently, with awards given, based on weight category

Lightweight – Richie Reynolds

Medium weight – Leo Sharpe

Heavyweight – James Grunfelder

Congratulations to all prize winners and to all competitors for completing a challenging, but thoroughly enjoyable event. Other than great racing, there was great company, and a fun social atmosphere.

Thanks goes to the Georges River Sailing Club for hosting the event and to all the volunteers who helped out crewing the start and course boats. A big thank you also goes to Shore Manager Trish Nelson and Principle Race Officer Nick Nelson.

Hopefully the momentum from the event this year can build into next year.

Check out the great shots of the event, that really show how exciting, enjoyable, versatile and competitive Raceboard sailing is: (click on photo album above)

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Day 3

Posted on Jan 27, 2014



Day three of the Raceboard Oceanics saw light winds and calm waters in stark contrast to the previous two days. The remnants of Day two's southerly met competitors in the first race of day 3. The wind was just strong enough to be comfortably on the rail, but dropped throughout the race. The entire fleet was out on the water with big sails rigged.

As expected, the light conditions gave the opportunity for different sailors to move up the field. Richie Reynolds showed how much of a light wind gun he is by streaking away to take the win. Leo Sharpe proved he is a skilled sailor in all conditions, crossing the line in second, just in front of a fast finishing James Grunfelder. Ben Morrell came in fourth followed David Shannon-Hooper, thriving in the conditions after missing the previous day.

The wind dropped further and then shifted around to the north east. Once the wind had settled, competitors were able to watch a Windsurf One Design (WOD) race and observe the best parts of the course to sail to. The windward return course ran parallel to the shore in front of the club, enabling the whole race to be seen. The bright fluoro sails spread across the water was a great sight.

Patchy wind, a strong current and a multitude of water craft passing though with Australia Day festivities, made the conditions quite challenging and tactical. Following the WOD example, sailors stuck near to shore and Richie led in the first lap, followed closely by Ben, Leo and James. David picked the opposite side of the course in the second lap and it worked wonders, leapfrogging him to first to take the win. Richie finished in second and Leo continued his strong form to come in third. Jamie Metcher demonstrated the strength of the D2 in light conditions, finishing in fourth.

In the third race of the day Ben Morrell started strongly and was able to stay in good wind to reach the top mark first and maintain his advantage to take the race win. There was a close fight for second, with Richie just passing by David and Martin Thearle in the dash from the final mark to the finish. Jamie continued his good form to finish in fifth. The leaders of the regatta, and dominant sailors in strong winds finished well down, with Leo in eighth and James in ninth.

The limit of three non-planning races in a day meant no more racing was completed. The light and variable wind led to a sharing of good results. The day was perhaps more enjoyable for the fleet as a whole, with the lighter wind enabled all to focus on racing, rather than survival. There were close tussles between competitors all through the fleet.

At the end of day 3 Leo maintains his lead, but the other rankings were shaken up as some excelled and others had a hard time on the day. Ben jumped up to second, pushing James

down to third and Simon to fourth. Richie was the winner of the day and brought himself up to fifth overall.

Forecasts are for a beautiful 10-15 knot north easter on the final day of racing. If it eventuates, it would top off the championships to give the full range of conditions in which the Raceboard shines.

In the Windsurfer One Design class the battle for the NSW title continued with 4 more races held in the light, shifting conditions. The very colourful fleet was a great spectacle with the racing conducted right in front of the club. By the closest of margins Marty took out the title from Robert Howard and Will Wright.

The winners in the weight categories were;

Lightweight : Martin Stone

Mediumweight : Will Wright

Heavyweight : Gerald Nailon

The first lady (and 4th overall) was Carina Flodin.



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Day 2

Posted on Jan 26, 2014



The 20 plus knot southerly forecast on the second day of the 2014 Raceboard Oceanics well and truly came through, blowing from early in the day. High wind sails were rigged by all, ranging in size from 6 m to 9.5 m. The wind direction enabled the start line to be set just off from the Georges River Sailing Club. A windward return course was set in the confines of the river entrance. The Raceboards were joined by a fleet of Windsurfer One Designs in their NSW state titles, giving a great spectacle of sails on the water.

In the first race the close battle between Leo Sharpe and James Grunfelder continued with Leo taking the win followed by James. Rhys Herbert, who missed the first day of racing, was right in contention, and should have taken the win, but missed the final mark. He was able to recover and still finish third in front of Simon Fyfe. Jamie Metcher showed great skill to handle his Exocet D2 around the windy and choppy course and finish in fifth.

The wind built for the second race and this time James was able to get the win over Leo. Rhys raced well again, to finish in third. Brendan Moore followed, in fourth. The racing was

competitive throughout as the challenging conditions presented opportunities to make up, or lose time. The passage of some large leisure cruisers through the course generated some even more menacing chop through which it was difficult to travel unscathed and dry. Many competitors spent time in the water multiple times during the day.

After a lunch break there was some gear changes to smaller sails and fins with the wind continuing to build. The third race saw James and Brendan build a big lead until hit by a rouge gust. James was dumped in the water and Brendan was lifted out of the water and “capsized” in his own words. Rhys and Simon were primed to take the lead until a broken harness line caused Rhys to crash at the bottom mark, obstructing Simon to also hit the water. Leo and Ben Morrell overtook to push into the lead. Leo sped ahead to claim the win. Simon finished in second passing Ben in the second upwind. Ben was able to just hold on to 3rd from John Doolan who was flying through the field after a late start on his 6m sail. Reports from the boat crew were that the lulls were 20 knots and gusts over 30. With the plus 30 knot readings, the final race was cancelled.

Some great skill was on display by competitors throughout the day to handle the boards at high speeds with short sharp chop and to tack and gibe efficiently in the strong wind. It was an achievement in the conditions to be able to finish the races intact.

The standings after day 2 have Leo in the lead, followed by James, Simon, Brendan and Ben. Light conditions forecast for day 3 have the potential to shake up the standings, and give some of the light wind specialists a chance at the top positions.

In the Windsurfer One Design fleet Roger Crawford is tied with Marty Stone for the lead followed by David West.

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Day 1

Posted on Jan 24, 2014



The 2014 Raceboard Oceanic Championship started today in the expansive waters of Botany Bay, Sydney, hosted by the Georges River Sailing Club. The forecast wind was a NE of about 12 knots, potentially dropping during the day. The first race started close to 1 pm with a lovely 12 knot breeze from the ENE. Race Officer, Nick Nelson set a “P” course and most sailors were sporting their “lightwind” 9.5m sails.

Right from the start the race was a close battle between last year’s champion Leo Sharpe and Sydney hotshot James Grunfelder. Leo lead first around the top mark but James battled back to overtake on the second lap and claim victory.

Contrary to the forecast the wind was slowly building and the second race saw gust of 15 knots or so. Once again Leo and James were out in front but this time Brendan Moore and Simon Fyfe were much closer to the action. The “famous” Botany Bay chop was starting to build testing board handling skills from the fleet. The off the wind speed of the new Starboard Phantom 377L’s didn’t seem much different from the standard model, making for close racing from the top mark. James came out on top again followed by Leo & Brendan.

A lunch break enable the sailors to change sails as it was obvious that the wind was continuing to build. Sails from 9.5m down to 7.0m or so were rigged up and all were back on the water by about 3:30pm. This race proved very trying for most in the fleet with only 6 sailors completing the course. Leo won by a minute from Benjamin Morrell and Brendan. A mast track failure saw James record a DNF. Most sailors had a bit of a swim in this race as the fierce chop made gybing and tacking very tricky.

With a few rescues to perform and the wind gusting over 30 knots RO Nick decided to cancel the last race.

After day 1 , Leo leads from Brendan, Simon, Benjamin & Glen

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