



# INTERNATIONAL FORMULA WINDSURFING CLASS

28 April - 03 May '14 | Portugal, Praia da Vitoria, Terceira, Azores

## 2014 Azores Formula Windsurfing World Championship



Congratulations to the podium winners:

- 3rd Gonzalo Costa Hoewel (ARG)
- 2nd Steve Allen (AUS)
- 2014 Formula Windsurfing World Champion**
- Ross Williams (GBR).**

17 nations, 3 continents  
12 Championship races



### FINAL RESULTS: **OVERALL**

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*Photos by Eric Bellande*





Over 40 entries from 17 nations representing 3 continents were on the [entry list](#) for the 2014 Azores Formula Windsurfing World Championship which took place in Praia da Vitoria, Ilha Terceira, Azores. To see what everyone was racing with, [check the equipment list](#).

**No wind for the first scheduled day of racing but An Action Packed Day two** with collisions, injury, equipment breakage . . . made 4 races and a valid championship!

Racing in the harbour, the course had a start mid-way between windward and leeward gates. Competition began with an average 9-10 knots but by the end of the day it was anywhere between 8 and 18 knots. These gusty and shifty S-SW winds brought testing conditions, mentally and physically, for the competitors and race crew alike.



Ross Williams, GBR-83, ended the day the clear leader and most consistent sailor with two firsts and two seconds. Stephen Allen, AUS-0, took the bullet in race three and was second overall. Janis Preiss LAT-23 and Casper Bouman NED-52 had equal points but Gabriel Browne was only one point behind in fifth. Gonzalo Costa Hoevel ARG-3 had a big lead over the finish line in race four but was down in ninth overall.

**Day Three** saw the completion of another four races. This was an extremely challenging competition, so many top competitors in contention, fast and furious racing with thrills and spills providing nail-biting spectator entertainment.



Britain's Ross Williams continued to lead, but Australian Steve Allen was the star performer of the day with 2 firsts and 2 seconds shortening Ross' lead to just two points.

The good news was that Italian Marco Begalli was fit and well enough to race again after his trip to the hospital the day before.

The first race of the day saw an average wind speed of 12.5 knots, gusting 18 knots. The start and finish were in the middle of the course with a short beat to mark 1 and a long downwind to mark 2. Ross took the first bullet having managed to overtake Steve by the third lap but he had some mixed results in the next 3 races, including a port starboard incident after the race 8 start.

Argentinian Gonzalo Hoevel put in a great performance today, pulling himself back into contention, ditching his two rubbish results from the day before, and finishing today in third overall. He maintained a huge lead over the pack in the second race in winds that had increased to 16 knots gusting 22 knots.



The wind stayed the same for the third race in the early afternoon when again Gonzalo was leading the pack. Arnon Dagan ISR-1 was giving him a run for his money but it was Steve Allen who crossed the line just ahead of Arnon, Gonzalo having to settle for third.

And so to the last race of the day when gusts of 25 knots were recorded in the middle of the course. After Ross completed a penalty turn he was unable to make much ground and is no doubt pleased to be able to discard his eighth place in this one.



There was a big fight on the upwind leg between Vincent Langer GER-1 and Steve Allen but Steve held his position to take the bullet, and Gonzalo gained ground to take second with Michal Polonowski POL-16 coming in third over the line. Vincent had to settle for fourth. Thus we had ten different nations represented in the top ten after 8 races, some having moments of brilliance, others sailing more consistently. Ross was still in the lead but the gap was getting shorter!

Friday's racing was expected to be big again with good, strong winds forecast and another four races scheduled. Could the top three - Ross Williams on 10 points, Stephen Allen on 12 and Gonzalo Costa Hoevel on 16 - keep the rest of the pack off the podium?



Despite Ross Williams winning the first two races **on day five, the penultimate day**, a 5th and 6th in the last two meant Steve Allen closed up on the overnight leader with a bullet in the last race of the day. Just one point now between GBR-83 at the top and AUS-0 in second, and ARG-3 in third had narrowed the gap to just five points! With a maximum of three races possible on the final day, the title of 2014 Formula Windsurfing World Champion was still not certain. It doesn't get much closer than that!

In third place overall on the leaderboard, star sailor of the day was Gonzalo Costa Hoevel who, despite some problems in the first race of the day, came back with a first and a second in the next 2 races. This was enough to consolidate his position on the podium step but also brought him closer to Steve Allen. He was leading in race 12 but damaged his boom and was fortunate to finish in 4th.



Fierce contests were going on right down the leaderboard with places being exchanged, many competitors were getting used to the tough conditions and seem better able to manage the big gusts of wind hitting the course area. In the final, and windiest, race the conditions swung from an average of 18 knots to 28 knots in the strongest gusts.

**On the last day of the Azores Formula Worlds**, the skippers meeting was held as scheduled but there was little or no wind and a poor forecast. However, the conditions can change very fast in Praia da Vitoria so the race committee took to the water.

It was a long anxious wait during a long day knowing the time of the last possible starting signal was 17:00. The wind was patchy, only around 6 knots, and the race committee monitored the wind every 15 minutes . . . until raising AP over A at 16:00!

**Congratulations to the podium winners: Gonzalo Costa Hoevel (3rd), Steve Allen (2nd), and 2014 Formula Windsurfing World Champion Ross Williams.**

Many thanks to Carlos Borges and his event committee, a very efficient and friendly group; many thanks also to race director Bruno de Wannemaeker and his race committee who provided the maximum number of races possible over the 5 racing days.

And thanks to all the competitors for their sporting participation in very challenging conditions.



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*Photos by Eric Bellande*