

Formula Windsurfing Oceanic and Australian Nationals 28-30Jan2016.

As usual for an event so early in the global year, all the latest and greatest equipment was ready to be tested in actual racing conditions with the new Hollow PD Board probably creating the most interest. Botany Bay, Sydney was the location and the weather forecast promised some excellent conditions.

Day one commenced with the usual registration & welcomes in the Georges River Sailing Club's regatta room. With some 26 sailors signed on including 10 Free Formula sailors, a junior in Jacob Whitford, who had travelled down from QLD with his father Cameron and Lara O'Brien our lone female sailor, we all headed up to Ramsgate Beach to set up camp for the following three days. By 1pm we had a course set in a light north-easterly, ranging between 8 & 12 knots. Tough racing it could be said. Giving everyone a lesson in light wind sailing & leading all the way & all day, was one Steve Allen. Keeping him honest however, at certain legs of the course, was Justine Lord who was closely followed by Brett Morris & Rick Murray. As the storms rolled in and snuffed out the remaining sea breeze, racing was canned for the day with a BOM promise of a better day to come Friday.

Pics from the Day: <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=oa.979075905516877&type=1>

Day 2

With so much potential (thank you BOM) how disappointing in the end. The bulk of sailors had arrived with eager anticipation at Ramsgate beach by 11am & Andrew McLachlan & his crew had a course set by 12.30 in building north-easterly. As the wind started to break up the surface of the bay, things were looking on the up and up & some were even considering dropping down to their medium sized sails. But just as quickly as the wind arrived, another ominous looking cloud formation was building in the west & by around 1.30pm we were all cowering in our cars taking in the spectacle of the light show on the bay looking out towards Kernel. With the Race officer and crew sheltering on the start boat, we all watched on nervously as the storm slowly passed and by 3.00pm the call was made, with the boats heading back to the club. Not to be deterred however and with the steely resolve of a windsurfer, a change of course was made on the notice board and the Storm-riders yellow boat kicked into gear, with Brett Morris heading out on it to laying an alternative windward leeward course. (just in case the wind came back) Unfortunately suffice to say, it wasn't to be and the day was called just before 6pm.

Pics from the Day: <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=oa.979586055465862&type=1>

Day 3

As sailors again arrived early at the beach for the final day, we all held our breath in hope that perhaps the forecast would somehow be wrong again. As it turned out the wind gods took mercy on us and we had a promising looking breeze building out of the south east by 12pm. By 12.30 we again had course set, with a windward top mark & gate bottom to give people another option on the return upwind leg. With three back to back races in the first part of the day, we then returned to the beach for lunch in the hope that we'd have another two to finish off the regatta. However after the break and as we returned out to the start boat, just as it had done the day before, the skies darkened & we knew that this one may well be the final race of the day. And what a race it was: With most of the fleet still on their big sails & as the storm rolled in, the wind kicked in & by race end we had 20knot gusts from the south for the final lap. Despite the wind change, this made little difference to the dominance of Steve Allen, with Justin Lord managing a very commendable 2nd place and Sean O'Brian taking advantage of the 10.5mt that he'd been stuck with for the whole regatta. Indeed as Steve pointed out in his winning acceptance speech, at the end of the day, it was a regatta for 12.5mt sails his year! Perhaps a trip north of the boarder for next year might be just the ticket to change that part of the equation.

A very big congratulations to the winners and place getters. Open Fleet: Steve Allen, Justin Lord & Brett Morris Grand Masters: Rick Murray, Tibor Ferenczy & Wayne Bowness Free Formula: Lara O'Brian, Bruce Healey & Steve Cominsky Youth Winner: Jacob Whitford

A massive thanks to our sponsors www.Slake.co & Windsurf & Snow for the fantastic prizes and support with all winners receiving a new mast from Slake and some great windsurfing accessories from Windsurf & Snow

A very special thanks to our photographers Rob Plim & Mari Barrios for doing a great job and providing some wonderful images over the preceding days. The final days images will be available soon.

Finally, many thanks to Andrew McLachlan, Jeremy Atkins, John Slender & Andy from GRSC. A special mention & thanks also to John O'Brien for supporting the sailors on the beach with communication back to the RO and providing the results for the event. Thank you also to the travellers from interstate, was great to sail with you all and very much looking forward to doing it all again next year

Adam Craven AUS-032 🤪

Windsurfing NSW President

GRSC Windsurfing Class Captain