

NSW and The 2014 Nationals

The attendance numbers from NSW were down a lot this year but the top results still came through. Four classes sailed, NSW picked up two wins and a closely fought 2nd place.

That will do nicely.

An interesting statistic is that the ultrafast WA guys filled in two 2nds and a 1st in the same events. Marbleheads were the only class we didn't shine in this year with the only trooper entering being Phil Lawson who picked up a creditable 8th in a strong field of 16.

The most dominant comment that came through from discussions and reports with the competitors was how friendly and encouraging the series were. In spite of some interesting and trying conditions, the fun factor always seemed to kick in. There were often long delays, so much socializing and 'mine is bigger than yours' stuff was happening between sailors who often only see each other once a year. Well done to all.

Here are the stats for NSW this year. Great work for making the effort to troupe down to our southern friends and support their efforts. For a couple, this was their first Nationals, hope you had a memorable occasion.

A Class

- 2nd Brian Dill
- 9th Ben Harvey
- 10th Ron Moon
- 12th Andrew Sands

10 Rater

- 1st Scott Condie
- 3rd Phil Page
- 5th Owen Jarvis
- 6th Selwyn Holland
- 11th Phil Lawson
- 13th Andrew Sands

Marbleheads

- 8th Phil Lawson

IOMs

- 1st Paul Jones
- 5th Scott Backhouse
- 9th Lindsay Walker
- 21st Tim Brown



In the above image, Owen Jarvis (NSW RYA Secretary) is reporting on Ian Hayden's contributions to the Radio Yachting community in general. Unfortunately Ian passed away amongst family members a few days later after a long illness. We remember him as a friend and dedicated contributor to the sport he loved. The gentleman on the right is Dave Thomas, a major force in producing this year's Nationals. He worked long hours to keep the titles running smoothly.

Some hearsay from the **“Water’s Edge”**:

1. It would have been nice to have had some mementoes of the occasion ie shirt, hat, poster etc. Except for the site and some lovely pictures from John Sterland there was nothing to take home and hang in the “Sail Loft”.
2. Considering the distance that a lot of sailors travelled, it would have been better to still run the 3 days for the smaller classes considering the price remained the same. The cost would have easily covered the extra food on the 3rd day considering there were no mementoes etc. Also the 10rs actually got a lot fewer races in and in essence it was a 1 ½ day regatta... a third day would have helped. Long way to come from WA. Maybe bring it up at the next nationals for consideration.
3. As stated earlier, the sailors were very friendly and sailed with a lot of comraderie and plenty of congratulating to the top places in the races. On many occasions there were also titanic struggles in the lower placings as a couple of sailors would tussle with each other, often ending with “high fives” for the “winner”. Fun to watch.
4. Finally, as there was often a lot of sitting around waiting for races to start it was almost a carnival atmosphere with lots of opportunity to compare ideas and renew old friendships.

Now for the class comments from some of the NSW competitors.

A Class Report

This was a 2-day event with 14 competitive entries representing most states. Sunny skies, the prevailing wind was SE to S for the two days, 5 to 8 knots with some gusts slightly greater on day 1, and 0 to 3 knots to commence day 2 with the wind filling in as the day progressed to 8-10 knots. The wind direction presented the officials with a challenge to set a fair start line and work to the top mark. The courses set always presented a lift and shifts from the right hand side of the course so starting at the windward end was paramount for a good first leg throughout the event. With the start line extremely biased to a starboard tack start (it would have been impossible to cross the line on port tack in most races) and everyone wanting to start at the favoured end, you can imagine the resulting chaos in many of the starts. A number of general recalls ensued.



*All images
courtesy of:*

*John Sterland
and Selwyn
Holland*

This was not helped by the fact that there was a group of bushes on the bank above the start line and many of the skippers elected to stand 30 metres above the start so they did not have to run past these after the start. This was where the start tape was generally located making it difficult to clearly hear the countdown if you elected to stand in line with the start buoys. This did not go down too well with some skippers when they were called for an infringement as they ran past the bushes with their boats out of sight! The poor start line was clearly shown up at the end of day 1 when two attempts were made to run the last race of the day but both were unsuccessful as boats laid the mark in one tack. This also happened on day 2! There were many great tussles throughout the fleet, with fair but tough sailing with all penalties done promptly. At the end of day 1, 2013 champion Graeme Howie held a clear lead from Brian Dill who was closely pursued by Jeff Green, Justin McAullay, Ian Dickinson and Frank Katers.



Day 2 began in drifting conditions with most boats making both big gains and big losses in the shifty conditions in the morning races. When the wind strengthened slightly, Graeme and Brian strung together a number of firsts and placings to break away from the field and consolidate their positions. The big mover for the day was Frank Katers, who improved from 6th overnight to 3rd with a number of impressive wins and high placings.

The Boats

The three Swords won 22 of the 28 races, and seemed to have better speed to windward when the wind filled in. Of the other designs, the Venom and the Wombat (from WA) cleared out in a couple of races with big wins, and the Gunboat was the fastest boat off the wind.



The Champ

The winner sailed very consistently and with skilful course management but didn't appear to be any faster on the water. He got over the finish line better than everybody else, is excellent to race against, and a very deserving winner. Congratulations Graeme.

Also, thank you to the fantastic support from the helpers (spotters) in launching and retrieving the heavy A class yachts at the jetty and their generally good nature. The overall atmosphere was very friendly on and off the water.

(Report by Brian Dill and fill in comments by Ron Moon)



10 Raters Report

The 2014 10 Rater National Championship was started with a one lap "invitation race" which the NSW Publicity Officer Selwyn Holland suggested be sailed as a tribute to Ian Hayden for his services to radio yachting. The race was fittingly won by Ian's close friend Scott Condie.



Racing proper then got underway with long three lap windward, return courses with a gate at the bottom. The first couple of races were sailed with a running start, which proved to be unworkable. Subsequent races were sailed with a windward start but with a line so biased that if you started at the leeward end of the line you were already 10 metres behind. The gate was so far away that no one could read sail numbers so calls were made using the colour of the boat as reference. As nearly all 10Rs are black... Anyway, apart from some confusion about the number of laps sailed in some races (most sailors can only count to two) the event was mostly well run and everyone enjoyed it.

Unfortunately the race committee decided it should only be a two day regatta which was disappointing for those who had travelled from interstate, especially the WA sailors.



Congratulations go to Scott Condie for retaining the National title sailing his brand new "Trance" which was designed by Brad Gibson and built by Scott.

(Report by Owen Jarvis)



I was someone who was not going to attend the 2014 Nationals due to a health scare. After the all clear I made a late entry and had the pleasure of travelling to Melbourne with Owen Jarvis as he was only sailing the 10's as well. On arrival at our motel I had a chat with Graham Howie about the conditions for the A class and what we could expect for the 10's. On arrival at the pond for the first day the breeze was fairly light and standing in the control area the breeze was hitting the skippers fair in the back. Not a good omen.



When racing started the course was a (heaven forbid) running start, which became more interesting at the first mark. With thirteen 10's on a square run only the very lucky could see the mark let alone know if you were past it. Assuming you were past it and had not taken out it was then a long beat up hill which was not too bad. The breeze came and went and changed direction more times than I can remember, quite a challenge for the PRO. Anyway racing went on through the day and by the end of the first day it was obvious which boats and skippers handled the conditions and which boats suited the conditions. Some had a better day than others: which is sailing.

The second day started off worse than the first with the pond like glass and the odd puff of breeze to tempt the PRO to set a course and start a race, only to fall away again and then return from a different direction so the course needed to be reset. Only one race was completed in around 2.5 hours. It was a PRO's nightmare and for the skippers very frustrating. Finally mid-afternoon on the second and last day a sea breeze settled in and some great racing took place, most went to B rig with one or two going to C rig. I think the boats that were suited to the lighter flukier breezes took a back seat to the Diamonds which seem to take the afternoon's racing by storm.



In conclusion I think it's always great to attend a National Championship and renew old acquaintances from around the country and see friends that you meet over the years, as well to meet new friends. Sharing a few beers at the pub or having a meal together is a big part of sailing regatta's in this day and age. My only advice to the people who have the task of arranging and running these events is to consider the travellers, their travel arrangements and accommodation. These are a major part of their early organisation to attend and at the most expensive time of the year. It is my opinion the number of sailing days should not be governed by the number of entries in that class. The skippers that are prepared to travel should be given their money's worth with three

days sailing a minimum. As skippers that book accommodation for the event never know how many entries will be there it's very hard and end up not needing the last day and it costs money. Also, the races need to be turned over faster as people who come to these events come to sail and not wait around.

(Report by Phil Page)

Marblehead

From what we heard, this series was similar in wind direction and conditions to the A Class and 10Rs. It was PRO'd by the very capable Glenn Dawson from WA and was dominated by the southern states. Lincoln McDowall from Victoria took out the title in the end won comfortably, with our intrepid traveller, Phil Lawson holding up the NSW flag with a very credible 8th placing.



IOM



The 2014 IOM Nationals Titles were held by the VRYA at Caribbean Lakes. Whilst the fleet size was down on previous years with 42 registered boats, WA, SA and Tasmania fielded some very strong entrants along with the usual quality sailors from Victoria. NSW numbers were down a little with 2 representatives from KBRYC and 1 from LMRYC. Unfortunately just prior to the regatta we lost our dear friend Ian Hayden to illness and many of our sailors wanted to pay their respects to him in the coming days. As one who also wanted to pay my respects, I also felt Ian would have liked to see one of his own, a KBRYC member participating and giving it to the big guns, and in tribute to Ian, I carried his initials and sail number on my boat throughout the regatta and I hope I did him proud.



With the numbers as they were this allowed PRO David Thomas to run 3 fleets throughout the regatta normally consisting of 17 boats and allowing for the 4 boat relegation and promotion. For those who have not had the pleasure of sailing at the venue before, it could be best described as a combination of sailing at Norwest Business Park and Dunmore Lakes - a large business development site 20km from the coast with a small parkland dropped in the middle. Whilst breezes in the lead up days to the event were excellent for the Marblehead championships, unfortunately for the one metres breezes were lacking and the regatta was sailed nearly entirely in A rigs with only one B rig race. The lack of breeze throughout the event would try skippers and officials patience throughout the 4 day event. On a positive note though, Melbourne put on some nice hot weather with no rain throughout the event.



On the sailing front, skippers were faced with long waits and sailing not usually getting away to just before lunch. Skippers faced large wind shifts throughout racing and many race restarts due to being able to round the top mark in one leg, all caused by late minute breeze changes. With only 4 or 5 races able to be completed each day, it was important for sailors to be consistent during each day and avoid the dreaded trip to B fleet. B fleet became most sailors' worst nightmare and a trip here could see you stuck in B fleet for several races as with the fluky conditions made it hard to always be in the right spot at the right time to finish in the top 4 and return to A fleet.



No sailor was fortunate enough to stay in A fleet for the entirety of the regatta. Everyone visited B fleet at some stage of the event. Whilst most mornings provided no breeze, ironically once sailing was completed at 4.30 pm each day, the breeze always appeared to be at its strongest and most consistent. Most sailors commented for future regattas maybe later start and finishing times should be looked at or the PRO given the flexibility in the sailing instructions to extend the days sailing by an hour or two.

After 3 days of racing, 14 races had been completed and Paul Jones held a small 9 point lead over Ross Bennett from WA and a small gap further back to Sean Wallis from WA in third. Team WA as they became known as, was very fast and sailed a good regatta. Glen Dawson also from WA sat in 9th going into the final day, showing the rewards for the effort they had put in leading up to the Nationals. I don't think one group of sailors had travelled the country as much as team WA in lead up to the event and their boat speed and handling was showing. At the completion of day 3 Paul Jones had not won a race and between the top 3 they had only won 3 races out of the 14 sailed so far, showing the toughness of the conditions, the speed of the fleet and more importantly the greater need to be consistent. Craig Smith sat in 7th with his regatta all but over after too much time spent trying to get out of B fleet. NSW was also performing well with as mentioned Paul in first, Lindsay Walker in 4th and a real chance for a podium, and myself chipping away inside the top ten in 8th.

Unfortunately late on day 3, we again witnessed the ugly side of our sport, with many personal confrontations taking place. I do not know if this was a side effect of the light and frustrating conditions but we saw skipper to skipper yelling, skippers bullying mark officials and threats made between competitors and officials. It was an ugly afternoon of sailing and fortunately the public were not witness to these events. This has to be removed from our sport and I think NSW has done a lot to try and remedy this situation. What made this worse to me was, it was our more senior and experienced sailors who were the worse culprits in many of the circumstances. A PRO should not have to tolerate such behaviour, they have a hard enough task as it is and we must remember all our officials are volunteers.



Paul Jones (NSW): new National IOM Champion

Day 4 saw a shift in the weather and a more favourable breeze direction and strength. The course was moved and sailors rigged up at the alternate launching and viewing area. This allowed 7 races to be completed and a total of 21 for the event. Paul Jones found his rhythm and with increased consistency took a strangle hold on the event, mind you only cracking it for a race win in race 18 and subsequently in Race 19. The leader board shuffle started and that dreaded trip to B fleet started to shape the final results. With only 3 drops allowed, those who could sail consistently on the final day were going to be rewarded. Team WA looked shaky and the Tassies were threatening. In the end Paul Jones sailing a Cheinz won the event with Ross Bennett (Vickers V8) hanging on for second some 46 points behind first. Rodney Muller (Cheinz) from Victoria snuck home for 3rd, 1 point ahead of Lisa Blackwood (Britpop) from Tasmania with myself (Britpop) a further 2 points back in 5th. Lindsay Walker (Fusion) managed to stay in the top ten and finished 9th: giving NSW 3 boats in the top 10 and 2 in the top 5. The top 4 consisted of 4 different states, showing the evenness of the skippers and boats across the country.

PRO David Thomas and his small team conducted themselves well given the trying conditions and we thank them for their contribution and effort. Anne Walker once again undertook the thankless task

of scoring and did a magnificent job and we can't thank her enough. The National Championships now move to WA and given their enthusiasm over the past 12 months, I am sure Glen Dawson and his team will put on a good show. The dates have been slotted as the 7th to the 17th of January and those thinking of going are advised to book accommodation early. WA is holding over 20 units in a particular accommodation spot. The order of events look to have the IOM,s second last so watch the web for up dates. A web page from WA is already under construction (see end of report... editor).



Finally at the AGM I represented NSW as it's delegate and I was fortunate enough to read a tribute to Ian Hayden had been prepared by Selwyn. I thank Selwyn for this and was very proud to be able to do this. It was also moved the 10 Raters hold an invitational race prior to the commencement of their Nationals each year and this event be in tribute to Ian. Both Victoria and WA have agreed to fund the trophy for this event.

There is more I would like to write about what happened off the race course and into the evening and sometimes into the small hours of the morning, but as they say what happens on tour, stays on tour. Feel free to pull me aside next time your passing or join me for a beer after sailing next time and who knows you may hear how the real regatta was won or lost.

(Report by Scott Backhouse)

A Final Note

The 2015 Nationals will be held by the very capable Western Australian crew. A site is already up for this event and much of the planning is complete. So start packing your duffle bags, shining your hulls, ordering new sails and don't forget to get your accommodation organised EARLY... see the site for details and great deals, you can stay right next to the event at Mandurah.

For all details go to the ARYA site or the WA dedicated site for the 2015 Nationals here:

<http://nats2015.rsawa.asn.au>

See you over there.

May you pick up many happy lifts this year.

Selwyn Holland (Publicity Officer NSWRYA)