

## 2.4mR Australian National Championship at Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania

by Ray Smith, reprinted from *Sail-World Australia* 24 February 2023



2.4mR National Championships ©Peter Watson

**RBYC has developed a very nice little fleet of the mini keel boat, the 2.4mR, over recent years. There is a lot of energy in the class and when the National Championships were held in Tasmania in early February, eight skippers arranged to take their boats to Hobart for the event.**

If you say it quickly it sounds quite simple, but it turns out to be a significant logistical exercise getting boats and sailors to Hobart. You have to get across Bass Strait and while there is a record of a guy doing that in his 2.4mR a few years ago, the usual method is the 'Spirit of Tasmania'.

With the 180kg of lead in the keel, each boat weighs 254kg! A trailer is OK, but costs twice as much as a car alone, so the effective way to transport your 2.4mR is on the back of a small single cab, tray truck. If you don't own one, you can try to borrow one, but when that fails you could try to rent one, but you are not allowed to take a rental on the ferry! Yes, you have to read the fine print... they are apparently not insured for ferry crossings! How this was solved will require a small down-payment.

The ferry is a masterpiece of transportation - TT Line turn the entire load of passengers and their vehicles around in less than 3 hours! That is, disembark a full ship of cars, trucks and vans and their human cargo and then embark those going the other way. Very impressive stuff, and the service on board was impeccable. Well done TT Line.

OK, we get to Devonport and then we're faced with a 4 hour drive to Hobart. Easy enough if you ignore the 100's of wallabies and other mammals that jump out at you in the night; but take note that Tasmania closes down entirely at around 1830 each day - about the time that the ship arrives in Devonport. No service stations or fast-food outlets until you reach a 24 hour 'golden arch' place in Hobart.



2.4mR National Championships - photo © Peter Watson

I am enjoying this adventure and we haven't even seen the Derwent yet! Straight to bed on arrival at our accommodation in Sandy Bay and next morning a run to the local supermarket for victuals and refreshments for the week. Stowed victuals and time to check out the Derwent!

RYCT is no doubt very familiar to many ocean racers. For those who have not been there, it is a beautiful club well situated on the western shores of the Derwent in the Hobart suburb of Sandy Bay. As we drove up, we were presented with bright sunshine, flat water and very light breeze from the south west. This was looking like a fun place to sail and we were keen to get our boats off the truck and rigged.

A lot goes on in a 2.4mR - 15 or more control lines are directed into the 'cockpit' and these need to be re-rigged exactly as they were when you took the mast out back at home.

A 'shake-down' sail is essential just to make sure you put it back together properly, so as soon as the boats hit the water, we hoisted the sails and poked our bow out past the breakwater

What a wonderful sight - flat water and light breeze and not a cloud in the sky. Lots of discussion and advice for the new guys to the Derwent - "watch for current; the tides and current; winds from every direction; wind and waves and current etc." Well, all of that turned out to be true and was revealed in the coming days.

Seventeen boats were entered in the regatta, with the sailors from RBYC joined by sailors from the ACT and of course our hosts at RYCT. Three races were scheduled for the first day, three for the second day and two for day three.





2.4mR National Championships - photo © Peter Watson

The beautiful light breezes and flat sea we saw on our practice day were replaced by gusty winds from every direction and 'washing machine' chop on race day. I am starting to understand the apparently conflicted advice earlier in the week. The very experienced Race Officer, Nick Hutton and his team of volunteers from RYCT worked very hard to get a course laid, but the fickle Derwent River winds wouldn't have a bar of it. Course laid, start sequence commenced, AP goes up, start the process again; another big shift, AP up... very frustrating for all concerned and especially for the RO.

When racing finally got under way, the start was close and the boats spread out across the line. The 2.4mR's are very closely matched in speed, but the skippers with the most experience in sail setup and local conditions quickly moved ahead of the rest of us as we learned how to read the shifts.

It was evident from the results on day one that the guys to watch in this regatta were former world champion, Paralympic Silver Medallist and 10 time national champion, Matt Bugg and local expert, Steve (Rowdy) McCullum. Reigning national champion Neil Patterson from RBYC and former national champion Peter Russell from Canberra were close behind with the rest of the fleet spread out up the last leg. Very capable sailors all, and people we will be learning from as we move forward. We also had a couple of new sailors, Josh Stuchbery and Gary Bunyard at their first 2.4mR regatta and they were obviously taking lots of notes from the more experienced guys.

These little boats are very technical, and to sail them well requires very subtle trimming. Just a few minutes of inattention and you are a few boats lengths in arrears. There is no room for any errors in this fleet.



2.4mR National Championships - photo © Peter Watson

The forecast for day two was for even stronger wind and the Derwent didn't disappoint. The challenge of sailing on the Derwent is the complicated wind behaviour caused by the surrounding hills and especially the towering Mt Wellington. Spectacular! It doesn't require much imagination to see how the winds will move around the mountain and the surrounding hills. The RO had the courses set quite a distance off shore to minimise the effects of the hills, but that only helped a little bit.

The racing was slipping into bit of a pattern with the most experienced sailors, especially the locals, up front and the rest of us trying to figure out what happens next. The sailing was really challenging due to the wind, but with relatively flat sea, (compared with Port Phillip), it was a whole lot of fun.

With most of the crews staying at the same accommodation, it was a great opportunity to sit around the 'toolbox' and compare notes, highlight the various indiscretions on the water over refreshments and snacks, and promise to never do it again! Many laughs at everyone's expense; no-one was spared.

Day three the winds went into the north just for something different, and at 15-20kts with 27+kt gusts resulting in a couple of boats suffering significant gear damage. A fun day on the water for the last two races (if you didn't break gear) and with the ultimate winner coming down to the last race of the regatta.

Well done to Matt Bugg taking out his 11th national title, closely followed by Stephen 'Rowdy' McCullum and Neil Paterson in third.





2.4mR National Championships - photo © Peter Watson

As soon as racing was concluded, boats were prepared for the return journey. Craned onto the dock trolleys, de-masted, packed and lashed and then craned onto the respective little trucks.

We had the pleasure of driving the return leg to Devonport in daylight hours over the central highlands of Tasmania. It is obvious why this part of Australia attracts so many visitors - simply rugged and beautiful. Since we had all day to meet with the Spirit of Tasmania, we took our time and made a very curious little 'caravan' of trucks and boats.

Our sincere thanks to the RYCT and all the volunteers - this 2.4mR regatta was very memorable and a bunch of new friends made. We look forward to the next time we get to sail on the Derwent, and maybe, just maybe, do a better job of 'seeing the breeze'.

The 2.4mR is an exciting little boat with a big boat feel, and a challenge to sail well. It was until recently a Paralympic class and is sailed by people with various abilities all over the world. In the recent World Championships in Florida, half the fleet comprised sailors with disabilities. The running gear in the boats may be rigged in a variety of ways to enable anyone to sail them as you do not have to move around. The fleet is especially strong in North America and Europe and continues to grow in Australia.

For more details about joining the 2.4mR fleet in Australia or maybe even arranging a test sail of a 2.4mR, call the sailing office at RBYC - 03 9592 3092.

## Overall Results:

Pos	Helm	Boat Name	Sail Np	State	Club	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	Pts
1	Matt Bugg	Supermodel	AUS41	Tas	RYCT	-2	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	10
2	Stephen McCullum	Lowlife	AUS43	Tas	RYCT	1	1	1	3	DSQ	2	2	2	12
3	Neil Patterson	Digger	AUS878	Vic	RBYC	OCS	4	4	5	4	3	3	3	26
4	Peter Russell	Morna 7	AUS40	ACT	YMCASC	-6	3	6	2	3	6	4	6	30
5	Peter Coleman	Australia II.IV	AUS1010	Vic	RBYC	5	5	5	-7	6	4	5	4	34
6	Colin Brown	Fab Babs	AUS44	ACT	YMCASC	4	7	DNF	4	7	9	8	7	46
7	John Collingwood	Joey	AUS34	Vic	RBYC	DNS	6	3	12	1	5	DNF	5	49
8	Raymond Smith	Rocky	AUS808	Vic	RBYC	OCS	13	8	8	9	7	6	9	60
9	Mark Seager	Whitewash	AUS14	Vic	RBYC	7	11	-13	9	10	8	9	8	62
10	Eric Hines	The Shmoo	AUS10	ACT	YMCASC	8	-15	14	11	8	10	11	10	72
11	Peter Warren	Advance Australia	AUS9	ACT	YMCASC	9	12	10	6	5	DNF	DNC	DNC	76
12	Mark Durnan	Blue Gum	AUS47	ACT	YMCASC	11	10	12	-15	11	11	10	11	76
13	David Graney	What Could Possibly Go Wrong	AUS39	Tas	RYCT	3	8	7	10	DNF	DNC	DNC	DNC	79
14	Gary Bunyard	Southern Cross	AUS12	Vic	RBYC	12	-14	9	14	13	12	7	12	79
15	Glenn Norton	Squeezebox	AUS32	Vic	RBYC	10	9	11	OCS	12	DNC	DNS	DNC	93
16	Josh Stuchbery	Dame Pattie	AUS2	Vic	RBYC	13	16	15	13	14	13	DNF	DNC	101