



2014 2.4mR Sail Melbourne

Sandringham Yacht Club, 9-13 December 2014

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Matt Bugg (AUS) reclaimed the Sail Melbourne title from Paul Francis (NZL)

Cool, crystal clear Melbourne day for Olympic fleets

Shifty conditions and a cool and crystal clear Melbourne day greeted all the Olympic events racing off Sandringham Yacht Club on day two of the ISAF Sailing World Cup - Melbourne. Southerly winds 8-10 knots built late in the day to 16 knots, a more true local summer sea breeze.

Port Phillip is so vast and empty midweek, the fleets are well separated. Plenty of room to swing a cat as the saying goes. Other than the on-water race officials' and coaches vessels there are no other power boats and equally no wash interfering with the fleets. A clear, clean and fair track for the 504 boats and 800 or so competitors from around the world.

It's noticeably quiet inside the course boundaries too, the occasional polite reminder indicative of the opening light conditions and early stage of competition.

Ashore a corresponding chilled out and friendly vibe is noticeable around the SYC boatyard. Results are already adding up to determine who goes through to the weekend Medal races, but there's time in this first phase for conviviality and to joke around.

2.4mR

Peter Thompson, the NSW sheep farmer, and Matt Bugg (AST) from Hobart are this evening sitting on equal points in first and second places in the 2.4mR Paralympic one person keelboat, a scaled down version of an old 12m America's Cup yacht.

Turtled and jelly-fished on day three at ISAF Sailing World Cup Melbourne

First session competitors at ISAF Sailing World Cup - Melbourne spent much of day three tweaking boats, on their phones and chatting around the boat park at Sandringham Yacht Club. The late session arrived to rig up when the bulk of the early session still had the park brake on, drifting around on Port Phillip until their class AP flag eventually came down.

A light gradient 4-6 knot breeze under low cloud cover teased race officials until almost 15:00. Local counsel says the land couldn't heat up under the cloud to suck the shore breeze in from the south west, and the mist down the bay also kept the breeze from pushing in.

There was just enough puff for Olympic class PRO Ross Wilson to send the 2.4mR and Skuds off first, followed by the men's and women's RS:X, then direct his teams to set up more courses for the Lasers and Finns. By the time the second block kicked off, SSE winds at 11 knots led into a great twilight session and evening finish.

2.4mR

It was a case of smart sailing from Australian Sailing Team (AST) athlete Matt Bugg in today's two races. In a new boat he is still trying to get used to, Bugg worked the soft conditions and huge wind shifts of the first race to take out first place.

In the second race the wind built, but a port and starboard on the start with Peter Thompson (AUS) distracted Bugg, leaving him to fight for his fleet position.

"The racing was closer today. It was probably a bit more fun than yesterday. Sailing this new boat, there are still some things I am not 100 per cent sure about. Every day I am getting a little bit more familiar with it, which hopefully will equate into a performance gain. Today's given me a good buffer," Bugg added.

Moving back into second overall is Peter Thompson (AUS) after a fourth and a sixth today. In third place is Paul Francis (NZL), just one critical point behind Thompson.

Extreme sailing moves to Melbourne

When Mother Nature is feeling cantankerous sailors feel the effects more than a lot of athletes. Day four of the ISAF Sailing World Cup Melbourne produced the most thrilling action yet off the front of Sandringham Yacht Club, and the most drama.

Southerly winds were manageable at an average 22-24 knots, it was the vertical rouge waves and cranky sea-state that brought on some seasickness, cancelled starts and reduced the original racing timetable.

2.4mR

Paul Francis (NZL) and Matthew Bugg (AUS) swapped top finishes in today's two races.

Francis won race 5 of the series and Bugg countered by winning race 6. While others in fleet struggled with the sea swell and strong winds, and some just simply stayed ashore, the two cross-Tasman competitors challenged for the top place on the leaderboard.

"The conditions were fantastic. A lovely day for sailing," Francis said. "There was a bit of seamanship pumping the 2.4m and keeping it dry. It was a case of a crossover between racing and seamanship. In the second race gear problems forced Francis into second place. The only other finisher to survive race 6 was Neil Patterson (AUS).

Overall Bugg still leads the pointscore with Francis in second and Peter Thompson (AUS) in third.

For a design of its age hitting 13 knots downwind in a 254 kilo boat was "insane" said Richard Scarr, the national Paralympic coach for the 2.4mR and Tasmania's state high performance coach.

Top ten prepare for Port Phillip showdown

Day five at the ISAF Sailing World Cup - Melbourne was pedestrian compared to yesterday's blow up on Port Phillip, and all-in-all produced the best day's racing of the world-class event. The east in the 12-15 knot south-east breeze kept the inshore courses flat; further offshore the seas were lumpier though nothing like the steep walls of green water that forced the cancellation of racing yesterday for most classes.

2.4mR

Overall Matt Bugg from Hobart leads the 2.4mR, Kiwi Paul Francis is in second and Peter Thompson (AUS) in third. "Just two more races to go and plenty of pressure," Bugg added.

For the first race of the day the breeze was shifty and the pressure unreliable. "I had a terrible start," Bugg admitted. He found himself in seventh place at the top mark first time and made the tricky decision to gybe away from the fleet. Luckily he found a sweet shift which helped move him into second place by the bottom mark.

"My jib pole broke so I couldn't really attack Paul (Francis) and I ended up second. It's quite close between us now." Racing in the 2.4mR class finishes tomorrow.

Early Christmas presents for ISAF Sailing World Cup medallists

The first day of Medal Racing at the ISAF Sailing World Cup Melbourne produced gold medallists in half of the Olympic classes and the Paralympic divisions announced their series winners.

Howling morning northerly winds gusting up to 30 knots had backed off to 17kts by the time racing on the Stadium course began for the weekend crowd gathered on the northern deck of Sandringham Yacht Club and enjoying the driest seats in the house.

2.4mR

Paralympian and AST athlete Matthew Bugg couldn't wipe the smile off his face as he described his final outing at the ISAF Sailing World Cup - Melbourne as another perfect day on the race track.

With two firsts to wins to close the series Bugg comfortably secured first overall. "It started fairly windy today, but then dropped off quite quickly. The second race was a light air race which I am always quite good at," Bugg said.

First place in Melbourne is an encouraging start to his 2015 racing season as he prepares to head to Miami for the next World Cup event.

Second overall on the pointscore was Paul Francis (NZL) and in third was Peter Russell (AUS).

Overall Results 2.4mR

Pos	Nation	Sail No	Crew	Race										Points	
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total	Net
1	AUS	AUS 36	Matthew Bugg	1	2	1	(3)	2	1	2	3	1	1	17	14
2	NZL	NZL 1	Paul Francis	3	3	2	(4)	1	2	1	4	3	2	25	21
3	AUS	AUS 28	Peter Russell	5	4	3	2	(11) RET	11 DNC	3	5	4	3	51	40
4	AUS	AUS 30	Peter Thompson	2	1	4	6	(11) DNC	11 DNC	6	1	6	5	53	42
5	NZL	NZL 92	Brett Willcock	4	9	5	5	3	(11) RET	4	2	2	9	54	43
6	AUS	AUS 32	Gregory Hyde	9	10	6	1	4	(11) RET	7	8	7	8	71	60
7	AUS	AUS 27	Michael Leydon	7	7	7	8	5	(11) RET	5	6	9	6	71	60
8	AUS	AUS 38	Neil Patterson	8	6	8	(10)	6	3	8	10	8	4	71	61
9	AUS	AUS 31	Peter Geeves	6	5	9	7	(11) DNC	11 DNC	9	7	5	7	77	66
10	AUS	AUS 25	Mark Durnan	10	8	10	9	7	(11) RET	10	9	11 DNC	11 DNC	96	85

