

Matt Bugg at the 2012 London Paralympics

1-6 September 2012, Weymouth, Great Britain

Report by Craig Heydon/YAI, Photos by David Staley/IFDS

Matt Bugg gets ready for Paralympics debut in Portland

29 Aug 2012, Craig Heydon, Yachting Australia

Australian sailor Matt Bugg is preparing for his first taste of Paralympic Games action when racing gets underway on the waters off Weymouth and Portland on Saturday. Bugg has spent the last few months training at home in Hobart as he prepares to take on the world's best 2.4mR sailors at the London 2012 Paralympic Games. "My preparations for the Games have been great," said Bugg. "We've had the most beautiful sailing weather in Hobart over the last couple of months and training has been great. I'm really happy with my boat and sails and think I'm as prepared as I'm ever going to be."

The 2.4mR singlehanded class features incredibly close racing and while Bugg is only relatively new to the class, having first represented Australia in 2010, he's quickly gotten up to speed. While the London 2012 Paralympic Games will be Bugg's first experience of competition at the highest level the Tasmanian has his eyes on a podium finish. "I'm feeling confident heading into the Paralympics that if I sail my absolute best for the whole regatta I'll be coming home with a medal. This is my first Paralympic Games and I'm really looking forward to competing at the highest level of my sport and taking part in some great yacht racing," he said.

Australia's Paralympic sailors have spent a lot of time racing and training at the Weymouth and Portland venue of the last few years and have settled well into life in the Paralympic Games village. "Life in the village feels different to normal regattas because everyone is staying and eating in the same venue," said Bugg. "This has created a friendly atmosphere and the volunteers are fantastic."

The sailing competition at the London 2012 Paralympic Games begins on Saturday 1 September with medals to be awarded on Thursday 6 September.



Matt Bugg challenging the Paralympic Champion Helena Lucas on day 2, photo: David Staley/IFDS



Practice Race, photo: David Staley/IFDS



Matt Bugg day 1, photo: David Staley/IFDS

Winning start for Australian Paralympic Sailors in Weymouth

01 Sep 2012, Craig Heydon, Yachting Australia

Australia's sailors have made a strong start to their London 2012 Paralympic Games campaign with all three crews ending the opening day inside their respective top fives.

Colin Harrison, Jonathan Harris and Stephen Churm have the outright lead in the Sonar class after two races while Daniel Fitzgibbon and Liesl Tesch are tied for first in the Skud 18 and Matt Bugg is fifth in the 2.4mR.

In the single person 2.4mR fleet Tasmanian sailor Matt Bugg ended his first day of Paralympic Games racing in fifth overall. Bugg was eighth at the finish of race one, coming back from 10th on the final run before crossing the line fourth in race two. The results leave Bugg fifth overall in the 16 boat fleet, five points off the silver medal position and a further four behind the leading British sailor.

"Today was a great day for yacht racing," said Bugg. "We had perfect wind, almost some sunshine and warm weather. "I'm happy with my first day of racing, with an eighth and a fourth," he said. "I think I sailed well and was happy with my boat speed and most of my decisions and can't wait to get out there again tomorrow."

Racing continues on Portland Harbour on Sunday with another two races for each fleet. The sailing competition at the London 2012 Paralympic Games continues until Thursday 6 September.



Start pin day 1, photo: David Staley/IFDS



Tight racing day 1, photo: David Staley/IFDS

Fitzgibbon and Tesch lead Skud 18 class at Paralympics

02 Sep 2012, Craig Heydon, Yachting Australia

Australia's Daniel Fitzgibbon and Liesl Tesch lead the way in the Skud 18 class after two days of racing at the London 2012 Paralympic Games. Colin Harrison, Jonathan Harris and Stephen Churm are currently third overall in the Sonar fleet following a mixed day on the water.

In the 2.4mR class Australian Matt Bugg is currently seventh overall following the opening four races. Bugg finished the day with a sixth and an eighth to leave him nine points off the podium and 13 off the lead. In race one the Tasmanian sailor found himself 12th at the top mark before slipping one place further back at the bottom gate. Bugg had a great upwind leg, moving up seven positions to be sixth overall at the next mark, a position he held down until the finish line. Racing was once again tight in the 2.4mR fleet with just over a minute separating all 16 boats at the finish line. Bugg was 11th at the halfway point in race two but again worked his way forward late in the race, eventually finishing eighth.

Racing continues on Portland Harbour on Monday with another two races for each fleet. The sailing competition at the London 2012 Paralympic Games continues until Thursday 6 September.



Start day 2, photo: David Staley/IFDS



Running day 2, photo: David Staley/IFDS

Two Australian crews in medal position at Paralympic Sailing

03 Sep 2012, Craig Heydon, Yachting Australia

Australian sailors are currently in medal positions in two classes after three days of racing at the London 2012 Paralympic Games in Weymouth. Daniel Fitzgibbon and Liesl Tesch continue to lead the Skud 18 class, with Colin Harrison, Jonathan Harris and Stephen Churm third in the Sonar and Matt Bugg moving up to sixth in the 2.4mR. A lack of wind kept the three fleets on shore for a couple of hours on Monday morning, with racing eventually able to get underway just after 1.30pm in seven knots of breeze on Portland Harbour.

Matt Bugg has moved up to sixth overall in the 2.4mR class following a seventh and a fifth from Monday's two races. The results leave Bugg tied on points with fifth and 10 points off the podium with five races left in the competition. Bugg came back through the fleet in race one after rounding the top mark in 15th. He picked up boats on each leg, eventually coming home seventh. The Tasmanian sailor was ninth around the first mark in race two, picking up a position on each of the downwind legs to finish seventh.

"The last couple of days have been great, I've had really consistent results and am currently tied on points with fifth," said Bugg. "The weather's been perfect for sailing, I'm happy any time I can sail in Weymouth in shorts. I'm looking forward to tomorrow to hopefully put down some better results and climb up the leader board."

Racing continues on Portland Harbour on Tuesday with another two races for each fleet. The sailing competition at the London 2012 Paralympic Games continues until Thursday 6 September.



Top mark day 3, photo: David Staley/IFDS

Fitzgibbon and Tesch extend their lead in Skud at Paralympics

04 Sep 2012, Craig Heydon, Yachting Australia

Australian sailors Daniel Fitzgibbon and Liesl Tesch have extended their lead at the front of the Skud 18 fleet following four days of racing at the London 2012 Paralympic Games. In the Sonar class Australians Colin Harrison, Stephen Harris and Jonathan Churm are now fourth overall after their fleet was able to complete only one race on Portland Harbour on Tuesday. Light winds again delayed racing in Weymouth on Tuesday morning with the event finally getting underway in the early afternoon.

Matt Bugg has ended day four seventh in the 2.4mR class following a pair of seventh place finishes. He finished strongly in both races, moving up from 10th to seventh on the second beat in race one and then coming from the back of the fleet in race two. At the halfway point Bugg was 16th and last but had a great upwind leg, passing nine boats to be seventh at the top mark, holding onto that position on the final downwind. Going into the final two days of racing Bugg is 14 points off the podium at his first Paralympic Games appearance.

Racing continues on Portland Harbour on Wednesday, the sailing competition at the London 2012 Paralympic Games continues until Thursday 6 September.

Gold for Fitzgibbon and Tesch with a race to spare

05 Sep 2012, Craig Heydon, Yachting Australia

Australian sailors Daniel Fitzgibbon and Liesl Tesch have won gold at the London 2012 Paralympic Games with a race to spare. Australia's Sonar crew has the chance to make it a second London 2012 Paralympic Games medal for the country when they contest the final race on Thursday. Colin Harrison, Stephen Harris and Jonathan Churm are currently sixth overall, just five points off third and a further two off second.

Matt Bugg heads into the final 2.4mR class race in seventh position following a mixed day on the water. Bugg began his day well, finishing race one in fourth. He was seventh at the halfway point of the race, picking up a spot on the next beat and then two on the final downwind to close the gap to the leaders and finish fourth.

Unfortunately Bugg was forced to retire from race 10 after a collision with his Finnish opponent. Bugg was given average points for the race and heads into Thursday's final race with a chance to improve his overall standings.



Start day 5, photo: David Staley/IFDS

Dan Fitzgibbon and Liesl Tesch crowned Paralympic Champions

06 Sep 2012, Craig Heydon, Yachting Australia

Australian sailors Daniel Fitzgibbon and Liesl Tesch have received their London 2012 Paralympic Games gold medals after a lack of breeze cut short the sailing competition in Weymouth. Each fleet was scheduled to contest one race to finish competition on Thursday but when the breeze hadn't arrived by the cut off time of 1.50pm the London 2012 Paralympic Games sailing competition was brought to an early end.

Fitzgibbon and Tesch were the team to beat in the Skud 18 class all week, wrapping up their gold medal with a day to spare. The Australian pair had four race wins, five seconds and a third from the regatta's 10 races, giving them victory over their American opponents by six points, with Great Britain finishing two points further behind in third. For skipper Fitzgibbon his London gold was his second Paralympic Games medal, having won silver at Beijing 2008. Tesch finally won that elusive gold medal after coming so close before in wheelchair basketball. London 2012 was Tesch's sixth straight Paralympic Games, having previously won silver and bronze medals with Australia's wheelchair basketball team.

The pair teamed up at the beginning of 2011 and were on the pace from their first event, winning the ISAF Sailing World Cup round in Miami and going on to finish on the podium in every regatta they contested. There was extra cause for celebration for the Australian team on Thursday night after Daniel Fitzgibbon announced his engagement to Kumi Sasaki at the team dinner.

Australia's Colin Harrison, Jonathan Harris and Stephen Churm finished sixth overall in the Sonar class. Harrison, Harris and Churm finished just seven points behind second and five off third following a week of close racing on Portland Harbour.



The Australians, who were competing in only their third international regatta together after teaming up in January this year, were in the mix all regatta, having the early event lead following a good opening day. Harrison and crew went on to claim four top three finishes from the 10 races, with the light winds on Thursday unfortunately stopping them from pushing on for a medal in the final race. London 2012 was Harrison's third Paralympic Games after competing Athens and the winning bronze in Beijing four years ago.

Tasmanian sailor Matt Bugg finished seventh overall in the 2.4mR class on his Paralympic Games debut. Bugg, who has only been competing internationally in the 2.4mR class since the middle of 2010, was mixing with a fleet full of former Paralympic and World Champions all week, eventually finishing 19 points off the podium.

Bugg finished in the top 10 in nine of the 10 races, the only time he was outside the 10 was when he had to retire from Wednesday's final race after suffering boat damage in a collision.

Bugg had a consistent week, with three top five finishes and was in the hunt for the medals for much of the regatta.

2.4mR champions 3rd Heiko Kroeger, 1st Helena Lucas, 2nd Thierry Schmitter – photo: David Staley/IFDS



Weymouth and Portland

Sailing

Single-Person Keelboat (2.4mR)



Fleet Overall

As of THU 6 SEP 2012
AFTER 10 RACES

Place	Name	Pos	NPC Code	Gender	Points per Race										Total Pts	Net Pts
					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
1	LUCAS Helena	S	GBR	W	2	1	3	(11)	1	1	1	4	8	5	37	26
2	KROGER Heiko	S	GER	M	4	3	5	1	4	(11)	6	1	10	1	46	35
3	SCHMITTER Thierry	S	NED	M	5	2	1	6	6	(9)	4	6	1	6	46	37
4	SEGUIN Damien	S	FRA	M	1	(17) DSQ	4	4	10	2	13	5	3	2	61	44
5	TINGLEY Paul	S	CAN	M	6	7	2	(10)	9	6	2	2	9	4	57	47
6	LEBLANC Mark	S	USA	M	3	8	7	5	13	(17) OCS	3	3	2	8	69	52
7	BUGG Matthew	S	AUS	M	(8)	4	6	8	7	5	7	7	4	6.2 RDG	62.2	54.2
8	ERIKSTAD Bjornar	S	NOR	M	7	6	10	15	3	(17) OCS	8	8	7	3	84	67
9	REGUERO Julio	S	PUR	M	9	9	8	2	11	8	5	(13)	11	7	83	70
10	OLMI Fabrizio	S	ITA	M	10	5	(15)	7	12	4	15	9	6	10	93	78
11	ANDERSEN Jens Als	S	DEN	M	13	(14)	9	14	2	10	9	14	5	11	101	87
12	SALOMAA Niko	S	FIN	M	11	13	11	3	5	7	12	10	16	(17) DNF	105	88
13	FRANCIS Paul	S	NZL	M	14	10	14	12	(16)	3	11	12	14	9	115	99
14	DELIKOURAS Georgios	S	GRE	M	15	11	12	9	8	(17) DSQ	10	11	13	14	120	103
15	FERNANDEZ OCAMPO Juan	S	ARG	M	12	12	13	13	14	(17) OCS	14	15	15	12	137	120
16	LLOBET Francisco	S	ESP	M	16	15	16	16	15	12	16	(17) OCS	12	13	148	131