

CST Composites International 14 World Championships, Sydney, January 2010

Race reports

Day 1 Restarts, black flags and fast boats

Defending World Champion Archie Massey blitzed the fleet in his first qualifying race and was then black flagged in the second to finish 53rd overall after day one of the CST Composites International 14 World Championship sailed on Sydney Harbour.

Massey was disappointed with the black flag ruling that also caught several top-flight British sailors including Robert Greenhalgh and Katie Nurton after a series of general recalls. Massey was waiting on the results of a post race hearing to determine the ruling.

He did however say he was satisfied with his boatspeed but that he needed to work on having a “clean” regatta.

Day one of the regatta certainly proved eventful with the 108 boat fleet split into two in order to physically fit the fleet into the confines of Sydney Harbour.

Racing was held in a gusty sou’ easterly breeze ranging from 8-15 knots and generally flat water, although a nasty chop developed in the shadows of North Head.

While it was only day one of the regatta, a number of the boats showed good early speed.

The Victorian boat Too Late to Stop Now sailed by Mark Krstic and Andrew Wilson showed excellent speed and tactics to finish with a 1-2 as did the British boat WSI – Internet sailed by Andy and Tom Partington.

To reinforce the strength of the British team the third place in the provisional results went to Selden sailed by Roger Gilbert and Ben McGrane who finished with a 3rd and a first.

The top 10 provision places were dominated by Australians, Britains and a lone American. The next best country was Canada which had the boat The Orange Whip secure 14th overall in the provisional results.

The Orange Whip was sailed by Andrew McCorquodale and Rob Patterson of the Royal Canadian Yacht Club who showed a good turn of speed in the light conditions and finished the day with a 4th and a 13th.

Day 2 Austin and Massey running hot in qualifying

Day two of the CST Composites International 14 World Championship was held in light to moderate east nor'east conditions and... thankfully... increasing sunshine.

The two fleets of the Qualifying Series raced one heat each and it was the boats that showed form in the Teams Racing that continued to impress and dominate.

Sydney sailor Ben Austin took first place in race one after hot British sailor Rob Greenhalgh suffered a small setback in a gybe. Greenhalgh had shown excellent tactics and speed to lead the first race but a near capsize in a gybe set at the final top mark gave Austin just enough room and time to grab the lead.

Archie Massey of Great Britain won Race Two with a good margin from Australians Mark Krstic in second and Dave Hayter third.

Massey and his crew Dan Wilsdon had superior boat speed and tactics in the building nor'easter and held a small but comfortable lead for virtually the entire race. They not only showed a speed advantage upwind but had the boatspeed and strategy downwind to hold off and on occasion extend their lead despite the best efforts of the Australians Krstic, Hayter and Lindsay Irwin.

For Massey and Wilsdon the day was a good one all round after their request for redress on the black flag they got yesterday was granted which will now allow them to take an average result over the Qualifying Race series for that race.

The regatta continues tomorrow with more Qualifying Races for the divided 108 boat fleet.

Day 3 Blasting conditions

Sydney sailor Ben Austin and his crew Peter Nicholson had another hot race today in the CST Composites International 14 World Championship on Sydney Harbour.

Austin and Nicholson have been a bit of a dark horse combination at this regatta, showing blistering boatspeed at times and are shaping as a genuine threat.

Their effort was nearly blown apart after the race today when a rigging park incident saw Austin lucky to escape electrocution as his carbon mast touched overhead powerlines.

The electrical charge blew apart his rigging wires and tore a small hole into the mast about 2m down from its tip. Fortunately Austin, who was holding the boat at the time, escaped without injury but the incident required new rigging wires and an emergency overnight repair by CST Composites who happened to be on hand.

The action ashore was matched by the racing across the harbour as the nor'easter kicked in at 20-25 knots with gusts to 30. The conditions were made more difficult with a strong ebb tide for much of the racing today and this caused difficult, confused and steep seas in The Sound.

Andy and Tom Partington of Great Britain secured a good win in race one of the day ahead of a fast finishing Victorian Lindsay Irwin and crew Andrew Perry. The Partingtons led from the front for most of the race in a classic display of fresh-wind boat handling. Also chasing the Partingtons hard were Austin and Nicholson who finished third.

Victorian Mark Krstic and his crew Andrew Wilson won Race Two today by a narrow margin from British sailors Douglas Pattison and Mark Tait with fellow countrymen Tom Heywood and Ed Clay in third.

Krstic said he and Wilson won the race because: “We got lucky.”

In truth, they sailed a controlled and fast race with less mistakes and errors than most. This combination of boatspeed, tactics, a well tuned boat and good boat handling have helped to put them in the lead overall in the Qualifying Series.

While luck fell on some, it deserted others with Massey breaking a jib halyard and Greenhalgh breaking a spinnaker pole... in both cases these skippers and their quality crews sorted out the mess and finished in 12th and 7th respectively.

Day 4 British sailors take today's races

British sailors took first place in both the final Qualifying Races today (6 January) in Day 5 of the CST Composites International 14 World Championship.

Defending World Champion Archie Massey and his crew Dan Wilsdon recovered from their breakages of yesterday and posted solid win in race one for the day. They basically led all the way in a 8-12kt sou'easter under sunny skies.

Massey and Wilsdon relished the light to moderate seabreeze and generally flat conditions on the harbour to record a comfortable win ahead of Australian Ron Scherwinski and his crew James Lanati with Lindsay Irwin and Andrew Perry third.

In race two, it was the British pair of Robert Greenhalgh and Phil Harmer who cleared out early but they were forced to work hard for their win by a pack of Australians chasing hard. One of those chasing was Ben Austin with crew Peter Nicholson who looked to be threatening but they came unstuck at the first spinnaker hoist which ended in a capsize that cost nearly a dozen places.

South Australian Dave Alexander and his crew Cameron McDonald finished second ahead of Britain's Tom Heywood and crew Ed Clay.

The first leg of today's windward-leeward course was 1.5 nautical miles long and Massey/Wilsdon went round in 71min while Greenhalgh/Harmer were three minutes

quicker in the afternoon race... perhaps due to a slightly stronger seabreeze of around 10-16kts.

The Qualifying Series is now complete and Mark Krstic/Andrew Wilson finished on top of the points table with Massey/Wilsdon second, Andy and Tom Partington third, Greenhalgh/Harmer fourth and Roger Gilbert/Ben McGrane fifth.

Day 5

Archie Massey and crew Dan Wilsdon won race one of the Final Series in the Gold fleet today in a 5-10knot sou'easter sailed out of North Harbour, Sydney.

Wilsdon said it took them a while to get it together as they had duck a bunch of boats out of the start. But once the black boat Gill Carbon Express got a break it never let go of the lead.

The defending world champion Massey showed plenty of class in a race held in a fading breeze or as former champion Rob Greenhalgh of Great Britain simply put it: "Archie sailed well today, really well."

But Massey and Wilsdon did not have it all their own way and were kept under pressure from the Canadians Andrew McCorquodale and crew Rob Paterson in Orange Whip. Paterson said it was their best sail of the regatta so far and that the boat is "feeling pretty good. We have good boat speed at the moment".

"That was a good race today ... we seem to be going just as well in the light as in the heavy," Paterson said. "The boat feels really dialed in."

Former world champion Greenhalgh and crew Phil Harmer in Smash it finished third today after having to battle up through the fleet and deal with the sometimes fickle breeze.

"We had opportunities and had to work hard at changing gears as the wind decreased," he said.

Greenhalgh may have had to fight hard for his third place today but he was full of praise for the venue sailed from the Manly skiff club in North Harbour, Sydney. "This is an excellent venue and we are getting great courses."

Those courses are being delivered by a race committee led by former champion sailor Peter "Snubby" Moor who has had the challenge of fitting in the 109-boat fleet, albeit in two fleets, to the confines of Sydney Harbour and its traffic.

British sailors Roger Gilbert and Ben McGrane finished in fourth, followed by Australians Mark Krstic and Andrew Wilson.

In the Silver Fleet, Anthony Haines and Kevin George (GBR) were first today followed by countrymen Chris Kameen and Doug Walker, and then Germany's Axel Reinsch and Felix Weidling.

Day 6 Greenhalgh crashes chasing Massey

Former World Champion Rob Greenhalgh swims to his boat after its foiled rudder broke loose while jostling with current World Champion Archie Massey in race one of the Gold Fleet today in the CST Composites International 14 World Championship on Sydney Harbour. The two British helmsman were clear of the rest of the fleet at the time, contesting their own match race for the lead going into the bottom mark off Balmoral Beach when the rudder pin was lost. Massey and crew Dan Wilsdon carried on to win the race sailed in a light to moderate nor'easter that built to around 12-15kts on a brilliant sunny day in Sydney.

Greenhalgh and crew Phil Harmer righted the boat, dropped the kite and the main, and took a 'fast' tow from a nearby support boat back to the Manly skiff club. Back ashore, they found a replacement rudder pin and put the rudder box back in place and returned in time to start the second race of the Gold Fleet a short time later.

Day 7 Massey wins back to back crowns

British sailor Archie Massey and his crew Dan Wilsdon won the CST Composites International World Championship today with a race to spare on Sydney Harbour.

Massey is the first sailor to win the i14 world title back to back. *[Editor's note: not to take anything away from Archie's achievement, but this was subsequently discovered to be incorrect; Jamie Kidd won back-to-back Worlds in the 1980's]*

"Winning the worlds a second time ... yeah I am happy with that, it is the first time it has been done," said a laconic Massey.

"Dan (Wilsdon his crew) was exceptional this week but it was about three weeks ago that we just clicked.

"We have been sailing for three months here out in the waves and finally our coach one day said: your gybing is good, your upwind speed is good but your tacking is midfleet. So we went out and just tacked, tacked and tacked."

There was little argument that Massey and Wilsdon had outstanding teamwork but it was their speed downwind that seemed to stand out.

“We foil hard and point the bow lower than most,” he said. “14s pay off if you sail them dead flat.”

He also felt the modified bow of his Bieker 5 hull gave him an advantage. The modification has resulted in a straighter and lower bow in the final metre of his boat.

Massey said the best race of the regatta was race six today in a classic summer seabreeze of about 15knots of sou’east that gave them the world crown but a highlight of the racing was the one against Rob Greenhalgh when they passed each other several times and he only got the advantage when Greenhalgh lost his rudder.

Massey said he had his boat George 1st up for sale for the “right price” but considered the modified Bieker 5 was a ‘special boat’. No matter what happens with the boat, Massey is certain to sail the next i14 worlds at Weymouth in Great Britain.

Former World Champion and class legend Bill Devine, 72, won his title in 1979 at Long Beach USA and said of Massey: “He was sensational and had the boat speed. He is just so professional and at the moment is streets ahead of everyone.

While Massey and Wilsdon are World Champions in the International 14 class, the racing continues tomorrow (Monday 11 Jan) for the rest of the 109-boat fleet that has been split into Gold and Silver fleets. The split was a necessary safety measure in order to fit the large fleet into the confines of Sydney Harbour during a busy summer.

Day 9 International 14 Class Presentation at the Opera House point

Britain's Archie Massey and his crew Dan Wilsdon were presented tonight (11 January) with the CST Composites International 14 Class World Championship 2010 trophy and the Australian Championship trophy at the Opera Points Events marquee, at the tip of Bennelong Point under the famous 'sails' of the Sydney Opera House.

Yachting Australia President Andrew Plympton presented the prestigious trophy to Massey and Wilsdon at the event which was supported by Wild Oates Wines.

Plympton paid tribute to Massey and Wilsdon who dominated the regatta and did not need to sail today's final race.

Australian i14 class president Stewart Vickery said Massey and Wilsdon were worthy winners of the trophy that had a heritage dating back to the 1930s when it was contested as a teams prize.

"The class is privileged to have a champion such as Massey and his crew Dan Wilsdon. They were well prepared, had great teamwork and tactics, and sailed a brilliant series.

"Congratulations to both of them in winning the title in a competitive fleet that totaled 109 boats representing England, Canada, Japan, Germany, USA and Australia.

"The Australian class was proud to stage this event in the finest harbour in the world and our gratitude also extends to our race officer and former national champion Peter Moor who put on excellent courses from the base at Manly 16ft Skiff Sailing Club."

The presentation night was attended by more than 300 people who got to enjoy the sun setting through the Harbour Bridge.

Campbell MacLeod, National Sales Manager, Robert Oatley Vineyards said: "We're really pleased to support the Sydney World Championships presentation dinner tonight as Wild Oats Wines have much in common with International 14 sailing.

"Our contemporary range of wines share the Wild Oats name with Bob Oatley's 100ft super maxi and the essence of innovation runs through our winemaking, the yacht and of course, the exciting 14s. Congratulations to all the Sydney Worlds 2010 competitors."

The International 14 is one of the oldest racing classes in the world and has remained at the forefront of open boat sailing due to its class rules that encourage restricted experimentation. The next world championship will be held in Weymouth, England.

Massey won the Worlds as a British sailor and member of Itchenor Sailing Club and the Australian title as a resident of Sydney and member at Woollahra Sailing Club.