

Endeavour Homes 2023 Flying 15 Australian Championship at Fremantle

Report by Jonny Fullerton of Regatta Services

Twelve days of Flying Fifteen racing opened with an invitational race held in superb late summer afternoon sunshine and a light to moderate SW sea breeze.

Competitors have arrived from all over the world to compete at the 2023 Australian National Championship followed by the Flying Fifteen World Championship sailed off the coast of Fremantle in West Australia.

There are now 79 boats from 4 continents entered with overseas entries travelling from as far away as South Africa, the UK, Ireland, Hong Kong, New Zealand and all over Australia.



[Flying 15 Australian Championship & Worlds Invitational Race 2023 - photo © Lisa Smith](#)

Having completed measurement and registration the fleet have been busy over the last few days re-rigging and tuning their boats ready for the start of racing on Monday 13 March.

The schedule of racing began with an Invitational race on Sunday 12 March, to be followed by four days of racing for the Australian Championship. Another lay day is followed by seven days of World Championship racing with a provisional lay day in the middle.

A large number of the competitors left Fremantle Harbour to sail to the race course Owen Anchorage, just south of the Harbour entrance to take part in the warm up race.

The invitational race was held in superb light to moderate breezes on a warm late summer day. The start was delayed for about 30 minutes to wait for a light sea breeze to fill.

In a quite orderly style under U flag the race started in about 13 - 14 knots of south westerly breeze. Course 2 was signalled on the start boat which was a windward/leeward leg of 1.3nm per leg, followed by a triangle and another windward/leeward leg.

The first upwind leg was a bit left favoured with local Perth sailors Nick Jerwood and Brad Sheridan (South of Perth YC/Fremantle SC) rounding with a clear lead from club mates Greg Tonnison and Nick Robinson and kiwis Wayne Avery and Ross Bannan from Manly SC in third. There were a few breakaway leaders with a huge bunch making up the early to mid fleet positions.



[Nick Jerwood - Flying 15 Australian Championship & Worlds Invitational Race 2023](#) - photo © Lisa Smith

Positions stayed the same but by the end of the triangle reaches, the current world champions Graham Vials and Chris Turner (GBR) (Lyme Regis/Derwent Reservoir) were closing the gap on every leg. Going up the last working leg to the top mark the wind shifted again splitting the fleet. By the last downwind the breeze was up to around 15 knots and the waves picked up for great ride to the finish line.



Flying 15 Australian Championship & Worlds Invitational Race 2023 - photo © Lisa Smith

Nick Jerwood / Brad Sheridan finished comfortably ahead but Graham Vials / Chris Turner closed the gap finishing second leaving Greg Tonnison / Nick Robinson to take third spot on the podium.

Another South of Perth YC boat, sailed by brothers, Mike and Paul Dunbar came in fourth and a GBR/NZL combination, Jonny Cooper and Luke Deegan representing Cowes Corinthian YC took fifth.



Day 1



Mackay & Lawson on Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 2 ©Regatta Services



Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 2 ©Lyndsay Preece



Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 2 ©Regatta Services



Alderson & Paterson v Packer & McAullay on Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 2 ©Regatta Services



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Nick Jerwood and Brad Sheridan on Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 1 ©Regatta Services



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Graham Vials and Chris Turner on Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 1 ©Regatta Services



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Flying 15 Australian Championship & Worlds Invitational Race 2023 ©Lisa Smith



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Nick Jerwood - Flying 15 Australian Championship & Worlds Invitational Race 2023 ©Lisa Smith



Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 1 © Regatta Services



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Fleet downwind - Flying 15 Australian Championship 2023 ©Regatta Services



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2nd overall Alderson Paterson - Flying 15 Australian Championship 2023 ©Regatta Services



Flying 15 Australian Championship 2023 ©Regatta Services



Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 3 ©Regatta Services



Alderson & Paterson on Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 3 ©Regatta Services



Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 3 ©Regatta Services



Andrew and Anne Knowles on Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 3 ©Regatta Services



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Gilmour & Donaldson on Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 3 ©Regatta Services



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Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 2 ©Regatta Services



Pinnell & Cadwallader on Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 2 ©Regatta Services



Pinnell & Cadwallader v Mackay & Lawson on Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 2 ©Regatta Services



Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 2 ©Lyndsay Preece



Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 2 ©Regatta Services



[Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 1](#) © Regatta Services



[Philippa Packer and Dean McAullay on Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 1 © Regatta Services](#)

Two races sailed in superb sailing conditions kicked off the 2023 Australian Flying Fifteen Championship off the coast of Fremantle. Sunshine, crystal clear waters and a light to moderate breeze greeted the fleet on the opening day of competition.

79 boats launched, ably assisted by an army of volunteers including veteran Flying 15 sailor Graeme Lillingston, who is an 11 time Australian Champion and former World Champion. Graeme was supervising the crane operation and no doubt offering a few of his own tips about racing a F15.

Race 1 of the series started cleanly at 1305 hrs in a 12 - 15 knot south westerly with course 1 signalled on the start boat. This was a two lap windward / leeward leg of 1.5nm per leg followed by a triangle to finish downwind on the second lap.

Charles and Charlie Apthorp (GBR) from Hayling Is SC led briefly from Hamish Mackay and Andrew Lawson (GBR) from Royal Thames YC and Graham Vials and Chris Turner (GBR) Lyme Regis SC/Derwent Reservoir SC.

By the bottom gate Mackay / Lawson had taken the lead with Ian Pinnell and Ian Cadwallader (GBR) from Northampton SC chasing them down. Vials / Turner held on to third.

By the second lap on the triangle Mackay / Lawson maintained the lead and went on to take the gun. Vials / Turner were slick at the wing mark gybe to snatch a place and move up to second for the final reach home. Pinnell / Cadwallader finished third to make it a GBR podium.

Australians Grant Alderson and Luke Paterson from host club Royal Freshwater Bay YC took a number of places to finish strongly in fourth and the Apthorp family a well earned fifth.

If race one was all about the Brits, the local Aussies bit back in race two of the regatta. Sailed in very similar conditions with 1.5nm legs and another course one in 12 - 15 knots of SW sea breeze.

This time it was two local Royal Freshwater Bay YC boats, Philippa Packer and Dean McAullay who led the race from start to finish from the first windward mark. Grant Alderson and Luke Paterson chased hard all around the course but had to settle for second place.

Another RFBYC boat sailed by Hamish Carnachan and Peter Mudford was in the mix around the track but there was one British crew who you cannot shake off in the shape of current world champions Vials and Turner. They crossed third to spoil an all Australian race podium.



[Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 1 - photo © Regatta Services](#)



[Graham Vials and Chris Turner on Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 1 - photo © Regatta Services](#)

So after only two races the regatta scores are finely tuned. Vials / Turner (GBR) lead with 5 points from Alderson / Paterson (AUS) on 6 points and Mackay / Lawson (GBR) in third overall with 7 points.



[Nick Jerwood and Brad Sheridan on Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 1 - photo © Regatta Services](#)

Of the other Aussies chasing the Australian title, Packer / McAullay sit in 5th overall, Nick Jerwood and Brad Sheridan are 6th, Carnachan / Mudford 7th and the young Olympic sailors Lachy Gilmour / Ryan Donaldson 9th.

Day 3

Fremantle just keeps on delivering, another beautiful blue sky day and another two races in lighter 7 - 10 knot SW breezes. The water may be clear enough to see the bottom but there was quite a lot of weed floating around so a number of boats were seen clearing their foils before the start of race 5 of the series.

The fleet left Fremantle Sailing Club for race 6 due to start at 12 noon. As the breeze was a little lighter the leg distance was reduced to 1.3nm using course 1 which is a sausage followed by a triangle.

As has become a regular occurrence the fleet was well spread upwind. Graham Vials and Chris Turner (GBR) led briefly at the windward mark but Grant Alderson and Luke Paterson (RFBYC/FSC) overtook by the time they reached the downwind gate. Also closing fast was Andrew and Anne Knowles from (South of Perth YC) who seemed to excel in the lighter conditions. Other local sailors Rob Beurteaux and Simon Wilder (SoPYC / East Fremantle YC) were making an appearance in the top 10.

The two Australian boats pulled away on the triangle legs to take positions one and two, whilst Vials and Turner had to settle for third. Beurteaux / Wilder finished fourth and Ian Pinnell and Ian Cadwallader (GBR) in fifth.

Race 6 had to go through the motions, first a U flag caught out FFI Commodore Chris Waples (GBR) and then two subsequent Black flag starts caught out a batch of competing crews. Vials and Turner were amongst the culprits heading home for an early bath.

Finally around 1415 hrs race 6 got started using course 3, a two lap windward / leeward course with a longer 1.5nm leg length. The soft breeze just held but did give more importance to getting clear lanes on the upwind legs and pressure on the downwind legs.

At the top of the course Pinnell / Cadwallader rounded just ahead of Alderson / Paterson with Nick Jerwood / Brad Sheridan (SoPYC/FSC) back in the mix. Beurteaux / Wilder and local lads Lachy Gilmour and Ryan Donaldson were amongst the leaders again.

Alderson / Paterson got away downwind to lead at the gate with Jerwood / Sheridan closing on their stern. Positions 3 to 5 were however shuffling. Another RFBYC crew Greg 'Levo' Leaversuch and Peter Barblett came into contention for a podium finish. The two lead boats separated downwind and with the breeze softening it looked like it could go either way but when they converged Alderson / Paterson passed through the bottom gate a couple of boat lengths ahead of Jerwood / Sheridan to take the gun for the second time in the day and take the overall lead in the regatta. Gilmour / Donaldson finished an excellent third to maintain their healthy position overall.

Queenslanders Ashley Smith and Adam Kingston (sailing under a HKG flag) sailed their best race of the regatta finishing sixth in race 5. New Zealanders, Murray Gilbert and Jonathan Burgess from Royal Akarana YC in Auckland, had their best result of the regatta scoring an 8th in race 6.

Now that the only race discard comes into play Alderson / Paterson lead the rankings by 1 point from Vials / Turner with Pinnell / Cadwallader in third overall. There is then a small gap in points to Hamish Mackay and Andrew Lawson (GBR) in fourth and Jerwood / Sheridan in fifth.

It is all to play for with one more race to decide the Australian Championship which is scheduled for a warning signal at 1200 noon. The advanced forecast is for a shifty morning breeze which is due to build in the afternoon and swing to the SW with a lot more guts.



Nick Jerwood and Brad Sheridan on Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 1 ©Regatta Services



Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 1 ©Regatta Services



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Philippa Packer and Dean McAullay on Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 1 ©Regatta Services



Graham Vials and Chris Turner on Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 1 ©Regatta Services



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Nick Jerwood - Flying 15 Australian Championship & Worlds Invitational Race 2023 ©Lisa Smith



Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 3 © Regatta Services



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Fleet downwind - Flying 15 Australian Championship 2023 ©Regatta Services



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2nd overall Alderson Paterson - Flying 15 Australian Championship 2023 ©Regatta Services



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1st overall Vials Turner - Flying 15 Australian Championship 2023 ©Regatta Services



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Alderson & Paterson on Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 3 ©Regatta Services



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Pinnell & Cadwallader on Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 2 ©Regatta Services



Pinnell & Cadwallader v Mackay & Lawson on Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 2 ©Regatta Services



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Mackay & Lawson on Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 2 ©Regatta Services



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Alderson & Paterson v Packer & McAullay on Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 2 ©Regatta Services



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Gilmour & Donaldson on Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 3 © Regatta Services



Andrew and Anne Knowles on Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 3 © Regatta Services



Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 3 - photo © Regatta Services



Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 3 - photo © Regatta Services



Flying 15 Australian Championship Day 3 - photo © Regatta Services

The final day of the Flying Fifteen Australian Championship was set up to go down to the wire on the final day of racing and it certainly did that.

A rare sight on the Indian Ocean off Fremantle, grey clouds rolling in from a rare direction NW. The earlier forecast predicted a swing to the regular sea breeze direction of SW but when would be the question.

The fleet set off from Fremantle Sailing Club for one final race due to start just after noon. PRO Kevin Wilson set a course 6 which was two windward/leeward legs of 1.4nm in distance followed by an upwind leg to the finish. At the start the breeze was only about 7 - 10 knots but it was always due to increase.

A clear start this time under U flag so no need for the black flag. At the top it was the usual suspects, Graham Vials and Chris Turner (GBR) led by a couple of boat lengths from a close cluster including Ian Pinnell and Ian Cadwallader (GBR), Nick Jerwood and Brad Sheridan (AUS) and regatta leaders Grant Alderson and Luke Paterson (AUS).

Downwind Alderson / Paterson slid down on an inshore track to gain second place at the gate behind Vials / Turner. Jerwood / Sheridan moved into third. Back upwind for the second time and the skies begun to get darker with a real threat of rain, a very unusual phenomenon in these parts! Was this the change we were all expecting?

On the second lap there were several place changes below the top three boats but it was now beginning to look like a two horse race to the finish and a rapid look at the overall results to look at the maths.

Rounding the gate for the last time, Vials and Turner held a several boat length lead from Alderson and Paterson but the local Australians representing Royal Freshwater Bay YC would claim the win in the regatta on count back if places stayed the same. Alas a bit more drama was to come!

Vials and Turner were unlikely to be caught with a loose cover on Alderson / Paterson but any of the chasing boats could change the end result if one boat got between the race winners and Alderson / Paterson. This is exactly what happened, finally the big change came in the wind swung and the final beat became a fetch to the finish line in rapidly increasing pressure.

Graham Vials and Chris Turner from Derwent Reservoir SC/Lyme Regis SC in the UK, crossed the finish line in the middle to become Australian Champions. Nick Jerwood and Brad Sheridan (SoPYC/FSC) snatched second place in race 7 and by finishing third in the final race, Grant Alderson / Luke Paterson (RFBYC) had to settle for second overall missing out on the title by one solitary point.

Brits Ian Pinnell and Ian Cadwallader (Northampton SC) finished third overall and another British boat, Hamish Mackay and Andrew Lawson from Royal Thames YC finished fourth overall. Fifth overall went to Nick Jerwood and Brad Sheridan.

The remaining top 10 places were taken up by Australian teams with notable performances by the ex olympic sailors Lachy Gilmour and Ryan Donaldson (RFBYC/Esperance Bay YC) in sixth, Rod Beurteaux and Simon Wilder from (SoPYC/East Fremantle YC) in seventh.

Philippa Packer and Dean McAullay (RFBYC) finished 8th, the Dunbar brothers from (SoPYC) in 9th and Andrew and Anne Knowles (SoPYC) in 10th.

The 79 boat fleet have a well earned lay day tomorrow before the whole show re-starts on Saturday 18 March with seven days of World Championship racing.

[Full Results Available Here](#)