

Sailor's Eye View of ILCA 6 2024 Championship

By Frances Beebe

“It's never like this here.”

I know this is a common saying at every event, but this held true at the 2024 Oceania & Australian ILCA Open & Youth Championships. With the four AST/ASS women away in Argentina to compete at the World Championships, becoming the National Champion was up for grabs.

Despite the 15-20 knot sea breeze that came in for the practice race, day one of nationals greeted us with rainy and overcast skies, which prevented the sea breeze from filling in. Instead, these clouds resulted in a tricky day of light winds and sloppy sea state. These conditions saw tight results at the front of the fleet, with NSW Australian Sailing Futures athlete Brooke Wilson taking the lead after a consistent 1st and 2nd place. Patrick Cummin, a Victorian sailor, also achieved high results, placing in 2nd in both races.



Day two of nationals brought another day of cloudy skies, however after an hour and a half of waiting on-shore under AP, a moderate South-East wind built. Unfortunately, this was fought by a South-Westerly breeze, which resulted in a lot of waiting on the water too.

Thankfully, the race committee were up to the task, which allowed another two good races to be completed. The shifty conditions saw inconsistent results at the front of the fleet, with Brooke managing to extend her lead after a 5th and 1st place finish. Riley Cantwell, a VIC U17 sailor, saw the same results in both races, also winning the day.

The last day of the qualifying series was a late start for the ILCA 6 fleets, after waiting on shore for the ILCA 4 fleet to complete their three races. The race committee was eager for

both ILCA 6 fleets to complete two races in order for the race series drop to come into play. By the end of the qualifying series, most sailors at the front of the fleet had a substantial drop that they were happy to remove. After this drop was taken into account, the fleets were split into gold and silver, to begin the finals series of racing. Brooke still held her lead by a solid five points, however Paige Caldecoat, another NSW Australian Sailing Futures athlete, showed incredible consistency to be placing second overall.



The fourth day of racing, or first day of the finals series, allowed the first opportunity for sailors at the top of the fleet to come head to head. The weather had other ideas and with rain and thunderstorms all morning, the race committee eventually signalled AP over A for all classes.

Despite missing two races on day four, the race committee made the decision that they will aim for a ten-race regatta, and therefore only two races will be sailed on each of the final days of racing. This decision was vindicated, because in typical ILCA fleet behaviour, there were many general recalls for each race of the finals series.



In the first race of finals, a strong gust only lasted for the first upwind, and then the breeze died significantly, resulting in a very tricky second half of the race. Frances Beebe, Queensland Academy of Sport athlete, held a strong lead at the first top mark, however Charles Allen Toyn, a WA U19 sailor, chased her down during the first downwind in light breeze, and was able to take the first bullet for the finals series.



The breeze came in more consistently for the second race, and although the breeze did not pick up as much as expected, this was the first race of the regatta with the typical Adelaide conditions. After a few general recalls, eight boats were caught as a BFD, including Paige.

The race was a left-hand track, and due to the smaller fleet size, competition was tight during the race. Healy Ryan, a NSW U17 sailor, took the second win for finals series, with Myles Wilson, a QLD U21 sailor in 2nd place. Frances had another consistent race, finishing in 3rd, which moved her up to first place overall with only one more day of racing left.

On the last day of racing, a 15-20 knot Southerly with big swell was present, ensuring sailors were working hard right to the end. In the first race, Patrick, Frances and Mark Tonner-Joyce, a VIC GM, all fought hard at the front of the fleet, but Patrick was able to slip out of their grasp and take the win. Frances placed 2nd in that race, which allowed her to keep her lead heading into the final race.



However, with the second drop for the regatta about to come into play, the title of National Champion came down to the final race. Frances and Brooke had a few points lead over the rest of the fleet, and the regatta win would go to whomever beat the other.

With a pin-favoured line and an advantage on the left side of the course, both Frances and Brooke fought to hold a lane off the pin at the start. Frances secured her position to win the pin, however Brooke's terrific acceleration allowed her to gain the advantage. They fought neck and neck for the entire first upwind, whilst the rest of the fleet accidentally overlaid the top mark. With a solid lead in front of the rest of the boats, the battle for National Champion came down solely to Brooke Wilson and Frances Beebe. Brooke led the first half of the race, with Frances right on her tail, however in the second upwind, Brooke's consistency allowed her to gain some distance on Frances and secure the championship win.

With the overlaying of the top mark by majority of the fleet, many boats at the front of the results were deeper during the final race. This allowed a chance for placings to be shuffled around, including Patrick who finished in 6th place and managed to take 3rd place overall. Overall, the 2024 Oceania & Australian ILCA Open & Youth Championships were a great success. A big thank you must go to Adelaide Sailing Club, and the officials and volunteers.



Congratulations to our 2024 National Champion; Brooke Wilson!!

Results can be found at:

<https://www.sailwave.com/results/adelaidesc/ILCA%206%202024.htm>

Overall:

- 1st – Brooke Wilson
- 2nd – Frances Beebe
- 3rd – Patrick Cummin

Females:

- 1st – Brooke Wilson
- 2nd – Frances Beebe
- 3rd – Paige Caldecoat

Males:

- 1st – Patrick Cummin
- 2nd – Healy Ryan
- 3rd – Charles Allen Toyn