

## Optimists Sailors out in force at the Ronstan Indian Ocean Classic

The Ronstan Indian Ocean Classic hosted by Fremantle Sailing Club is the biggest Open class regatta that is held annually in Western Australia. Last weekend, saw over 150 boats representing 15 different classes compete off Fremantle. At 51 entries across the gold, silver and bronze divisions, the Optimists were by far the biggest fleet – demonstrating the healthy position of junior sailing in Western Australia. Other major fleets were the 420's, the Lasers and the cat class which included Tornados and F18's.

Saturday's weather forecast had worried the race committee all week and the strong winds led the race committee to make an early call to cancel the fleet racing on the ocean. Not to allow the day to go to waste, the "plastic" learn to sail Optimists were hastily brought out of the shed and a team racing event within the harbour was quickly devised. Twelve teams of four sailors came forward and battled it out throughout the afternoon. The event was won by a team from Royal Perth YC which included three current and an ex-opti sailor. The watching crowd loved the antics of the Tornado sailors – and is a great testament to the quality of these little boats that they stood up to the challenge!

Thankfully, the conditions on Sunday were perfect for fleet racing; the inner course which included the Optimists, 420's, boards and mixed skiffs completed five races. The winds were shifting and varying in range enough to make the racing challenging but not unfair.

The Lasers, Contenders, Flying Fifteens and Cats enjoyed true Indian Ocean conditions; they were so far offshore it was difficult to see them.

The effort the winners put in was rewarded by a range of fabulous products from Ronstan. Planning for next year has already commenced and the organisers hope it will be even bigger and better!!