

IODA ASIAN CHAMPIONSHIP 2010

The Australian International Optimist Dinghy Association sent a team of six sailors to the IODA Asian Championships. The team members were Nia Jerwood, Sam Blackburn, James McLennan, Jack Graves, Klaus Lorenz, Christopher Charlwood and Coach Diego Figueroa.

The Championships were held at the Royal Varuna Yacht Club, Pattaya, Thailand from July 3-11th.

The team arrived early to allow for three days of training. Despite a maximum two metre rise and fall of tide, the current was often around three to four knots. The tidal conditions created a steep chop which the WA sailors found particularly challenging. These three days were essential to allow the sailors to acclimatise to the heat, humidity, food and sailing conditions.

The team were accommodated together and in the same hotel as the majority of the other teams. 103 sailors represented 22 countries and most countries fielded a full team of seven. Australia was unable to have a seventh sailor due to the gender requirements of the IODA Continental Championships – at least two of the seven had to be girls.

All sailors were required to use identical “Winner” charter boats. Foils and spars were provided, but sailors had the option to use their own. All sailors used their own sails. Despite the use of identical charter boats and foils that are produced from certified moulds, a rigorous measurement process was undertaken. IODA implement this system as part of their ongoing quality checks for the numerous worldwide builders / suppliers.

The race management team completed all twelve scheduled races and the full team racing schedule, which IODA like to include in the continental championships, despite light winds and strong current. All races were sailed in under 8 knots of wind, apart from the final leg of race 1 when a storm front came through and turned the final beat into a reach. The “I” flag was used initially on every start with the race officer moving quickly to the Black flag as needed.

On water jury enforced Rule 42 under Appendix P and on water measurers scrutineered boats that finished in the top ten of each race. Penalties were imposed both for performance affecting infringements (eg. Incorrect sail tie positions) and also safety issues (centreboards not tied in and whistles not attached to life jackets).

IODA Championship regulations split the fleet at eighty boats: therefore the sailors were divided into four colours and raced in two flights.

Diego Figueroa and each of the sailors will be able to provide a more in depth analysis of performance, but generally the Australian results were very encouraging. Klaus Lorenz from Queensland finished 11th overall, 8 of his races were in the top ten. He was awarded the second position for Non- Asian boys. This is the best result an Australian has achieved in the Asian Championships.

James McLennan (Victoria) finished 20th overall, improving as the regatta progressed. James coped particularly well with the short chop and this will be beneficial for the IODA World Championship in Langkawi in December.

Jack Graves (Victoria) had eight results in the top 15 places leaving him 25th overall. Unfortunately for Jack, the strong tide and light breeze in Race 6 prevented him from finishing within the time limit. Jack is 12 years old and will be a sailor to look out for in the future.

Christopher Charlwood (44th overall from WA) has made great improvements in his sailing this year, he had some excellent results in this regatta; an improvement in consistency will assist his progress in the Optimist fleet.

Nia Jerwood (48th overall from WA) sailed fairly consistently during the first half of the regatta, but a black flag combined with being unable to sail the final two races due to illness meant a disappointing overall result.

Sam Blackburn was disappointed with his overall placing (55th). Sam performs well in the large regattas and his result does not reflect his ability.

James, Jack, Chris, Sam and Nia represented Australia for the Team Racing Championship which included 16 teams. The event was extended over two days due to the wind dropping out on the first day. A strong current was taking the boats over the start line, returning to the prestart side was very costly in

time and this became a significant strategy during the event. Australia sailed very well finally being knocked out by the highly-drilled Malaysian team. Australia ended the event 5th overall. Thailand were the winning team.

Overall for the Australians, the championship produced some very encouraging results demonstrating the continuing improvement in Australian Optimist Sailing. As importantly, the sailors had the opportunity to race against some of the best Optimist sailors in the World whilst learning about sailing in a current. The sailors all enjoyed the regatta and made many friends from the other Nations.

JANET JERWOOD

Assistant Team Leader.