

Ronstan 2024 International Finn Australian Championships

Davey's Bay Yacht Club, Melbourne

Report by Phil Chadwick

From the get go it was a battle of the Titans with Raffa Trujillo the 7 time Olympian (4 as athlete & 3 as coach) and Silver medalist, past world champion and Rob McMillan multiple National champion and 40 years Finn sailing in line for a battle royal.

Day 1 – Racing was postponed 2 hours to 15:00 to allow a lovely 10–12 kt SW to fill in and later fade to 8 kts in race 2. Blue skies and a steady breeze made for Champaign sailing.

Race 1 – Rafa started at the boat and Rob using his signature move the pin. Rafa he was OCS by a small margin and to be fair struggled to cross the line in 5th. Rob pressed hard left and came out ahead in what was a super steady breeze with only minor oscillations. Rob extended all the way and impressive with a solid win from Marcus Whitley, Bucky Smith & James Bevis then Raffa and Phil Chadwick.

Race 2 – The SW was fading slightly and in a congested boat end start Rafa made his move with everybody now pressing hard left, following in the footsteps of Rob in race 1. Rafa held onto 1st with Rob close behind to Marcus, Bucky and James. Marcus Whitley has shown he is a contender and is super quick using his spare mast which is super stiff sideways.

Day 2 – 12kt Southerly with pressure drops below 10 kts and lots of shifts. An overcast day with significant shifts made it a tricky day. Fortune favoured the brave and the ones who picked a side and stuck to it did best. Many tried the middle but would lose out to both sides in the end. Rafa had a day out with 1, 1 and Rob slipped a bit with 3, 4. Marcus was the mover with 2, 2 to be leading after day 2.

Day 3 – Plenty of sunshine today of the 2024 Ronstan FINN Australian Championships, but a real work out for Race

Management, course boats, rescue boats, jury boats and yes...
sailors too



Shifty winds, and boats pushing the line, saw multiple start sequence's playing out, with the 'black flag' becoming the flavour of the day.

Race 5 – Wacky racing on day 4 with a 10–12 SW with big shifts of up to 40 degrees building to a solid 15–20kt SW for race 6.

Race 6 – 20 kt SW with nice waves. Many struggled to get through the gybes and several capsized and few needed assistance. Thank you recue boats! Rob had a day out with 1, 1 whilst Rafa has 3, 3 and Marcus 8, 2. It is super tight at the top and a fantastic fight is on.

Day 4 (final day) – Race 7 started in a nice 6 kt Easterly with pressure bands and shifts coming from both sides. Again the middle was death. Four boats received a black flag but the leaders were away clean. Again Rob McMillan came our clear ahead from the left side with Rafa and Larry Kleist a good ways back. Rob must have lead by a minute at one stage but was run down on the final run when the pressure crapped out and Rafa and Larry carried a ghost of breeze down. Several gybes and counter gybes in the final minute gave the win to Rafa from Rob and then Larry just a few seconds adrift. The points are now all tied up with Rafa ahead on count back to Rob. Competitors were thinking it may be over but then a lovely 8kt Easterly popped up and held nicely for the final race.

Race 8 – 8kt Easterly with 20–30 degree shifts both ways. Rafa started at the boat and raced right. Rob at the pin and racing left. The right paid at the half way mark and Rafa pushed left to cover Rob, just in case it went back. Bucky Smith, James Bevis and a few others continued right and found another 20 degree shift to the right which effectively killed of anybody in the left including Rob. Rob did well to come back to 13th as he was way deep at the top mark. Rafa sailed brilliantly to pass at least 10 boats to finish 3rd in race 8 and take the Australian Championship.

The U23 National Champion is Jack Eickmeyer from Pat Cummin, Hayden Barney and Sam Ede. These young men stood out as

future superstars of our sport and should be congratulated. Jack will represent Australia at the Danish Nationals 23–25/8 and the Gold & Silver Cup in Aarhus Denmark 31/8–7/9. The U23 Australian Champion is supported by IFAA with Airfares, Boat charter, Accommodation and entry into the Silver Cup (U23 Worlds).

A highlight of the event was the Daveys Bay hospitality with a sausage in bread and a cool drink on offer as the boats arrived ashore followed by fantastic socials in the evening. The meals on welcome night and Saturday night were well above what a yacht club usually serves up. Top marks for the catering team and congratulations to all the wonderful Volunteers. Well done.