

SFS Race Report 11 January 2025
Australian Championship Heat 1 and Summer Series Heat 4

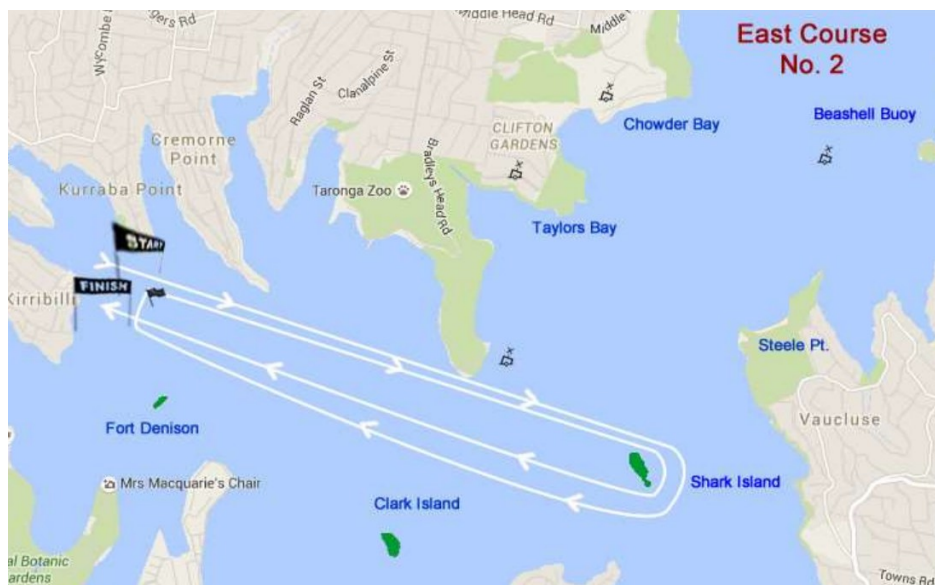
THRILLS AND SPILLS IN HEAT 1 OF AUSTRALIAN CHAMPIONSHIPS



Photo with thanks to Barley Stewart.

Eight boats started in Heat 1 of the Aussies and eight boats finished – but only just. More on that later in the report. Especially pleasing was the appearance of Aberdare back on the water and led by Michael “Flipper” Carter and a crew of champions. Was this to be the challenge to Yendys for the Galloping Ghost Trophy that we have all been waiting for?

Killo headed out early with the race officials who were anxious to have a good look at the breeze before deciding on the course. All morning the breeze had been oscillating between the east and north-east. And with a nor-easter predicted for later in the afternoon, there was a real question of whether we would be looking at the No.1 or the No. 2 course. After a quick trip up and down the Harbour noting that the breeze was more in the north east of Bradleys, but well in the east in the main harbour, it was decided that the No.2 easterly course offered the best conditions for a long work and long spinnaker runs that might shy up if the nor-easter came in early.



After the usual jockeying for positions in a scratch start, the fleet was away on time in 8 knots of breeze, with Aberdare getting the best of it, slightly to windward of Yendys. All boats started well with Alruth, back under the helm of Alan Robertson, and Australia (Marshall Flanagan) at the pin end also getting away well.



Photo with thanks to Barley Stewart.

The next challenge for the tacticians was what to do about the cruise ship anchored off Athol. She had been swinging on her mooring all day with the oscillating breeze and the changing tide. She would surely be a major block on any north in the breeze so a choice was to be made as to which side to go. Aberdare, Yendys and Australia, followed by Top Weight decided to go left and worked close into the Cremorne shore. Tangalooma (Neville Turbit) and Britannia (Dave Paget) decided that the breeze was sufficiently east to go right.

Aberdare and Australia crossed in front of Yendys at the first tack close to Cremorne Point and it looked like we were in for a real race. That was until Aberdare, with the new crew a little rusty perhaps, filled up and was nearly lost to the deep. When she finally was bailed out and got going again, Aberdare had gone from first to last and had a great deal to do as she watched the leaders disappear up the course.

Meanwhile, Tangalooma and Britannia had done pretty well in the centre of the Harbour, although the seasoned observers commented that staying in the middle rather than going right over towards Clark Island may have paid. Perhaps the decision was driven by the emergence of a large tanker that turned into the main harbour and proceed down the northern channel. Top Weight certainly might have wished otherwise when she found herself sandwiched between the cruise ship and the tanker and, unsurprisingly, ran out of breeze altogether.



Photo with thanks to Barley Stewart.



Photo with thanks to Barley Stewart.

With the fleet spread across the Harbour, Yendys and Australia came out best and by the time they reached the top of the harbour, Yendys had established a good lead over Australia and Alruth and went on to round Shark Island almost 3 minutes ahead of Australia and Alruth. Mistake had done the best of the rest rounding a further 3 minutes adrift. Top Weight had finally recovered from her hole and was next, followed by Britannia and Tangalooma with Aberdare an impossible 10 minutes behind Yendys and with the challenge having to await next week it seemed.

With the breeze now firmly ENE, starboard poles and spinnakers were set with all skiffs struggling for some reason to set quickly. We shall all be looking for big improvements next week in this department.

At Kirribilli, Yendys had increased her lead by another minute over Australia with Alruth continuing to press Australia in what was a great race for second place. They were followed by Top Weight, Britannia, Tangalooma, Aberdare and Mistake. Mistake had dropped back into last place after a spectacular failure of the turning block for the brace leading to her large red and white spinnaker flying free from the peak while Jerry Tickner and the crew struggled to recover the kite and get things back under control. Once that was done, we were all pleased to see that Mistake chose to continue the race and not head home for an early shower. Well done to Jerry Tickner and the Mistake crew.



Photo with thanks to Barley Stewart.

From then on the work back up to Shark island and the run back to the finish at Kirribilli was a bit of a procession. Yendys would have to break something or sink to lose the race and the minor placings were equally reserved for Alruth and Australia after Top Weight's misfortune on the first work. Poor Aberdare was finally hitting her straps but a fifth place was as best as she would do after filling up on the first work.

But we do have to record the extraordinary finish of Britannia who ran into problems on the final spinnaker run to the finish. Just past the stern of the cruise ship and within sight of the finish, Britannia lost a spinnaker pole and in getting things back under control was forced to deviate towards Cremorne Wharf. She then gybed and set sail for the finish with another gybe required to cross the line. It was then that things went pear-shaped for the Britannia crew. A delayed fixing of the new leeward lee cloth and with the crew slow to hit the new windward gunnel saw Britannia fill up and sink only 15 metres from the line and close to the pin. But with the assistance of the tide and the breeze, Britannia was drifting over the line, and was in serious risk of hitting the pin in doing so. If it hit the pin before any part of the hull of the skiff crossed the line, then under the Racing Rules of Sailing, Britannia would be obliged to do a penalty turn and finish again – pretty unlikely we all would agree since the boat was dead in the water. We are happy to report that Britannia was declared finished within the Rules and she was taken under tow back into Careening Cove.

So in the result, it was Yendys by over 9 minutes to Alruth with Australia a further 5 minutes behind in third. Heat 2 will be held next Saturday with a final heat the following Saturday when we shall also be racing in the Australia Day Regatta – always a fun day out.



Photo with thanks to Barley Stewart.

Results for Saturday 11 January 2025

Australian Championship Heat 1 and Summer Series Heat 4

Start Time:	2:30PM		Start	Course	Breeze	Strength	Tide
Fastest Time:	Alruth 1:34:52		Scratch	2	ENE	8-15 kts	Flood

Skiff	Skipper	Handicap (Mins)	Finish Time	Race Time	Corrected Time	H'cap Place	Ringtail
Yendys	Bazza Watson	0	4:06:27 PM	1:36:27	1:36:27	2	1
Alruth	Alan Robertson	11	4:15:52 PM	1:45:52	1:34:52	1	
Australia	Marshall Flanagan	13	4:20:35 PM	1:50:35	1:37:35	3	
Top Weight	Terry Stewart	13	4:21:27 PM	1:51:27	1:38:27	4	
Aberdare	Michael Carter	0	4:25:07 PM	1:55:07	1:55:07	8	
Tangalooma	Neville Turbitt	15	4:30:24 PM	2:00:24	1:45:24	6	
The Mistake	Jerry Tickner	20	4:35:19 PM	2:05:19	1:45:19	5	
Britannia	David Paget	20	4:35:50 PM	2:05:50	1:45:50	7	
Scot	Jamie Watt	19	DNC				
Australia IV			DNC				
Myra Too			DNC				

THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!!!

Our race officers: Rusty, Sascha & Claudia and guest skipper, Rob Stiertzel on The Killo.
Barley on the yellow gemini and Stewart on his grey rib!



Photo with thanks to Barley Stewart.

Next race is January 18, 2025 - Heat 2 of the Australian Championship.
Don't forget to gather the crew for the Australia Day regatta.

Saturday 11 January	Australian Championship Heat 1 + Summer Series Heat 4
Saturday 18 January	Australian Championship Heat 2 + Summer Series Heat 5
Saturday 25 January	Australian Championship Heat 3 + Summer Series Heat 6
SUNDAY 26 January	Australia Day Regatta Be a part of history – this is the world's oldest continuously run annual sailing regatta. Held every year, through peace and war, since 1837.

Keep scrolling for more pics



Photo with thanks to Barley Stewart.



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Photos thanks to Sascha Debney on The Killo





Britannia - going, going, gone ... with just meters to the finish line.

Photos thanks to Rob Stiertzel on The Killo





Britannia – reminding us that there is more than one way to finish a race.
Photos thanks to Barley Stewart

