



SYDNEY FLYING SQUADRON LTD

Australia's oldest open boat sailing club
Founded in 1891

THE RINGTALE

RACE 15: SATURDAY 7TH FEBRUARY 2026 YENDYS TAKES THE FINAL HEAT BUT ... ABERDARE WINS THE TITLE



SFS Australian Champions 2026 – Aberdare.

Photos above and below with thanks to SFS Board Member, Phil Franklin



The cheers for Aberdare as she was pulled up the ramp said it all! Aberdare, skippered by Michael “Flipper” Carter, was the popular winner of the 2026 Australian Championship after a well-sailed final heat (actually it was the first heat that bad weather had postponed until last Saturday) where Flipper had tucked away the competition ensuring that Australia IV (Rear Commodore Terry Stewart) did not place any more than a couple of places ahead of Aberdare to preserve his points lead over A4 going into the final heat.

Aberdare scored a 2:1:3 result in the three races and won from A4 by 1 point after A4 chalked up a 3:2:2 result. Yendys was third with 1:10:1 in the series.

10 knots of ENE breeze had been widely predicted for the race and the No.2 Easterly course was selected by our new PRO and starter, Steve Kidson. Steve had been warmly welcomed to SFS by sailors at the race briefing and takes over from Dave “Longy” Longworth who filled in wonderfully well in the first half of the season. Steve was assisted as starter by the experienced Ben Powell. Rippleside, again the comfortable start boat on loan from John “Woody” Winning, was skippered by Rob Gordon.



Seven skiffs greeted the starter: Aberdare, A4, Yendys (Bazzer Watson), Tangalooma (Neville Turbit), Scot (David Paget) The Mistake (Jerry Tickner) and Australia (Commodore Marshall Flanagan). Alruth was sadly left ashore with Alan Robertson still awaiting clearance from his medical advisors but looking good to sail next race.

Prior to the start off Kurraba Point, it was obvious to all competitors that there was more than a fair bit of north in the breeze and that getting on to port quickly and keeping a distance from the northern shore was going to be needed. Avoiding the congestion at the boat end, Yendys ran the line at speed and on the drop of the third red flag, tacked on to port and crossed the fleet that were all also soon tacked and heading for the top mark. From then on, Yendys was never headed.

But it was pretty “squirrely” until the Bradleys Head lee was safely skirted and the main breeze was met in the upper harbour. All crews needed to be on their feet, moving their weight in the boat to deal with the gusts (sometimes reaching 15 knots) and the lulls (where there was nothing much at all). The ebb tide was running too and the resulting chop - as always exacerbated by the “cumquats” (translation: large power boats travelling at speed and generating large waves) was having an effect. It was some compensation that the north in the breeze and the outgoing tide at least combined to mean that it was one tack to the Shark Island lighthouse. It was going to be what sailors call a “soldiers course”!

At the Shark Island gybe mark, Yendys led by almost 2 minutes from A4 with Australia a minute back in third. Aberdare, rounding fourth, was keeping a close eye on its competition and had only allowed one boat between her and her rival, A4. Tangalooma, in fifth place, was tucked away more than a minute behind. The Mistake and Scot were a further minute back.

The light conditions and the soldiers course were to favour Aberdare with a much reduced likelihood of gear breakage, or a sinking, as might have been the case in a blow. Aberdare just needed to sail conservatively and she would bring home the chocolates!

The spinnaker run down to the Kurraba bottom mark promised to be pretty shy with the north in the breeze. In fact, by then, it was nearly a nor-easter and there were some serious puffs compressing at Bradleys, coming over the saddle at Athol and channelling out of Mosman Bay and Shell Cove. Yendys had set a No.2 peak head spinnaker and was enjoying a fast ride, although having to run away in the gusts towards Garden Island. That meant an early drop and having to get back to the mark almost on a wind. The mark, incidentally, had become obscured by a very large motor yacht that had decided to anchor close to the entrance to Shell Cove.



Photo thanks to Phil Franklin

At the bottom mark, Yendys had increased her lead over A4 to almost 5 minutes. A4 had also put distance between her and Australia and rounded second with Australia, closely pursued by Aberdare, a further 7 minutes back. They were followed by Scot and The Mistake. Poor Tangles meanwhile had succumbed to a broken gaff and looked a sorry sight en route back to Careening Cove as she passed the fleet now having resumed the soldiers course and heading back to Shark Island for the final time.



Tangles in a state.

Photo above thanks to Simon on the rescue boat (Fergy); and photo below thanks to Phil Franklin.



But it wasn't over yet. Aberdare had still to complete the course and not let any more boats get between her and A4. And the breeze, contrary to expectations, was strengthening although holding ENE with the northerly bent still prominent. Yendys gybed at the Shark Island mark and went for her fast and efficient No.4 peak head kite. Again, it was a fast and tight ride with a lot of pressure keeping the crew busy before another early drop and a tight reach to the finishing line, still hidden behind the yacht where her passengers were enjoying a perfect view of the finish from their lounges on the port side of the yacht that had been opened up for the occasion.

A4, holding on tightly to second place and still in with a chance if Aberdare slipped up, chose a two-sail reach to deal with the tight shy course to the finish and did well with that choice, eventually finishing 6 minutes behind Yendys. But, alas for A4's chances for the Title, Aberdare had not only maintained her points lead, but had moved in front of Australia to finish third, three minutes behind A4 and almost 2 minutes ahead of Australia. Scot and The Mistake followed in that order.

So the Title was Aberdare's without the need for a countback and Flipper's name would soon be engraved on the coveted Galloping Ghost Trophy. Congratulations to Flipper and his crew variously during the series: Anna Charlton Shick and Phil Mulligan in the bow; Phil Franklin and John James (Jib); Karl, Chris, Michael and Renata (Mid) and Craig (Sheet). A4 had been in close contention and was a worthy runner-up finishing only 1 point behind Aberdare. Yendys, after her DNF in the second race was 3 points back in third place.

On handicap in the Championship, it is a real pleasure to report that the handicap trophy was won by Scot led by the father and son team of David and Ryan Paget along with Eloise Clark and their trainees. What a great result for their efforts! A4 was second and Aberdare third.

It does have to be recorded that the unlucky and one-time heavily favoured boat for the Title was Yendys. With two clear first placings in the two heats that she finished, Yendys' hopes for another title were dashed with gear failure in the second of the heats that resulted in a swim in shark alley and maximum points in the heat taking her effectively out of contention. Despite that, Yendys' crew celebrated the fun and camaraderie that sailing these great H18s gives us, well into the night, taking full advantage of the extended Saturday opening times in the clubhouse. (Renata's late night entrance, along with

Phil Franklin, on the balcony on a lovely evening, both victorious Aberdare crew members, meant that the Aberdare victory was observed in the appropriate manner!)



As always, thanks to our volunteers and race officials who see us safely on the water and back to land each week in summer. We really could not do it without you.



Our volunteers on the Rippleside – photo with thanks to Phil Franklin

Final results can be found here: <https://app.sailsys.com.au/club/15/results/series/5054/races>

Results for Saturday 7 Feb 2026						
AUS Championship Heat 1 (replace abandoned race from 17-Jan)						
Start	Course	Breeze	Strength	Tide		
Scratch	2	ENE	8 kt	Ebb		
Skiff	Skipper	Handicap	Finish Time	Race Time	Corrected Time	Handicap result
Yendys	Bazza Watson	0	3:48:56 PM	1:18:56	1:18:56	4
Australia IV	Terry Stewart	8	3:54:42 PM	1:24:42	1:16:42	1
Aberdare	Michael Carter	7	3:58:03 PM	1:28:03	1:21:03	5
Australia	Marshall Flanagan	12	3:59:53 PM	1:29:53	1:17:53	3
Scot	Ryan Paget	15	4:02:07 PM	1:32:07	1:17:07	2
The Mistake	Jerry Tickner	16	4:13:25 PM	1:43:25	1:27:25	6
Tangatooma	Neville Turbit	14	DNF			
Alruth	Scott Spackman	11	DNS			
Britannia			DNS			
Top Weight			DNS			
Myra Too			DNS			



Photo thanks to Phil Franklin



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These photos thanks to Simon on the rescue boat, Fergy





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These photos with thanks to Susan from the start boat, Rippleside





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SQUADDIE MERCH



- **POLOS (WHITE, BLACK AND NAVY) \$45**
- **RUGBY TOP \$90**
- **CAPS (WHITE AND NAVY) \$30**

SAILING CALENDAR

<i>Date</i>	<i>Day</i>	<i>Historic 18ft Skiffs</i>	<i>12ft Skiffs</i>
14-Feb	Sat	Squaddie Regatta inc QOH & Autumn series Ht1	
15-Feb	Sun		Association Sprint Series
21-Feb	Sat	Autumn series Ht2	
28-Feb	Sat	NO SAILING	Sail GP
7-Mar	Sat	Sydney Harbour Regatta and Autumn series Ht3	
8-Mar	Sun		Club Champ Ht3
14-Mar	Sat	Matthew Flinders Cup and Autumn series Ht4	
15-Mar	Sun		NSW Sprint Series Champ
21-Mar	Sat	Port Jackson Champ and Autumn series Ht5	
22-Mar	Sun		Port Jackson Champ
28-Mar	Sat	Club Championship Ht3 and Autumn series Ht6	
29-Mar	Sun		Club Champ Ht4
18-Apr	Sat	Presentation Night 6pm	Pres Night 6pm

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