

IFAV PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2023/24

The 2023/24 Season has been a landmark season for the IFAV. There were a number of events well run and well attended. This culminated in the successful National Titles and World Championships held at the Royal Geelong Yacht Club in February.

STATE TITLES 23/24

The IFAV Victorian State Titles were held at the Cairn Curran Sailing Club as part of the Cairn Curran regatta across the weekend of 25/26 November 2023. There were 14 Fireballs entered who experienced close racing across a range of conditions over 5 races. Congratulations to Brendan Garner and Ben O'Brien for winning their second State Title in a row, and commiserations to Chris and Heather Payne in coming second by a point. Phil Peverell and Bruce Shand earned 3rd place, being one point in front of Nick and Simon Gunner. There were many tight tussles for places in the racing and the overall results.

Thank you to the Cairn Curran Sailing Club for a great regatta, both on the water and off, and for support Fireballs over many years.

NATIONAL TITLES / WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS 23/24

The National Titles and World Championships were held at the Royal Geelong Yacht Club from 7th to 16th of February. This was the culmination of seven years planning. Thank you to the Royal Geelong Yacht Club for hosting the event, and thank you to all the competitors and volunteers for making the regattas successful.

The Nationals/Pre Worlds had 52 entries, with congratulations to Dave Hall and Paul Constable for winning the Pre Worlds and a special congratulations to Ben Schulz and Angus Higgins for winning their first National Title. Ben has been near the front the fleet for many years and it's gratifying he won. Congratulations to Richard and Liam Quinlan for placing first on handicap, and congratulations to Peter and Jen Russell for winning the 1st Australian Handicap prize.

There were 57 entries to the World Championships. Congratulations to Tom Gillard and Andy Thompson for winning the World championship. Congratulations also to DJ Edwards and Vyv Townend who placed second and congratulations to the home team of Brendan Garner and Ben O'Brien for placing third. Richard and Liam Quinlan placed first on Handicap again, with congratulations to Ben Garner and Sam Williamson for coming second and to Peter and Sebastian Durran for third on handicap.

The success of this event rested on many hours of effort by many volunteers over many years.

Thank you to Nick Gunner and Andrew Butler for organising and running a very efficient and effective measurement process. Also thank you to all the volunteers who assisted with measurement.

Thank you to Andrew Kean for his major role in marketing. He designed and liaised with the manufacturer to deliver the the world championship shirts. In addition he came up with the Seriously Exciting Fireball T shirt design and also organised printing of those. The blank T-shirts were donated by Addy Bucek. The finished products were a great hit as competitors received their shirts for a wide ranging set of fun reasons across the fleets. Some were parent and child sailing combinations and we heard their stories; others were spectacular sailing performances both good and bad.

A special thank you to Heather Payne and Ben Schulz for organising the replacement boats for the international competitors who required them. This was an exceptional last minute effort. Also a special thank you to Myles Gavin and Ben Schulz who bought boats to make them available to overseas competitors. This is definitely going above and beyond a reasonable effort.

The organising committee consisted of Brendan Garner, Heather Payne, Chris Payne, John Garner, the professional staff of the Royal Geelong Yacht Club and myself. As mentioned the event was seven years in the planning from the initial proposal, with a two year delay because of Covid. The committee contributed many hours over those years to ensure the success of the event, with each committee member making many worthwhile contributions. Given this it is still important to note the exceptional efforts of Brendan Garner who chaired the committee and made a massive personal contribution to the success of the event.

Finally, thank you to the event sponsors, without which the event could not have taken place:

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BULLEN MERRI 2024

IFAV continues to support the Bullen Merri regatta at Camperdown over Easter (29/3 1/4). This is a fun regatta with camping by the lakeside in a picturesque location.

The weather was much warmer and more enjoyable this year. There were 10 Fireballs entered with three races completed across Friday to Sunday. There was no wind on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. Brendan Garner sealed the travellers trophy, and managed to win the Fireball division sailing with Josh Garner. Simon Gunner also made it a strong family event by sailing with his son Finn.

The dinner at the pub on Saturday night went well, but we may try to organise this before the regatta in future as it is a miracle we secured a booking for 47 people the night before it.

Notable events for next season include:

- The National Titles to be held at Twofold Bay Yacht Club across the 13th-16th Feb 2025.
- The Youth Fireball National Championship held in conjunction with the Yachting Western Region Annual Easter Regatta at Lake Bullen Merri across 18th - 20th April 2025.
- The IFAV State Titles will be held at the Sail Sandy regatta across 19th - 20th October.
- The Cairn Curran Regatta across the 23rd- 24th November.
- The Colac Yacht Club Regatta across 7- 8th December.

To conclude, it has been a big and successful season. There has been encouraging and concrete interest in the class after the World Championships. Please continue to support the class by attending the events and engaging with new members.

Glenn Peverell

President
IFAV