

## **Nail Biting Finish to IOM Championship**

Going into the final day Sean Wallis held a slim lead of just 6.3 points ahead of Paul Jones, this was narrowed to 3.3 points by lunch as the championship was to be fought out between the pair.

Wind conditions were slightly lighter than previous days with a mix of A & B rigs for the earlier races however the course still remained challenging with the onshore breeze and gusts which swept across the course at regular intervals. As the day progressed more and more skippers chose the B rig as the preferred option although there continued to be some who felt the A rig was the better choice until a gust hit and the bow went down.

Wallis started the day well with a third in the first race of the day (race 14) while Jones scored a seventh and the lead stretched out. The second race of the day (race 15) saw a costly mistake by Jones who, after leading the race, sailed to the wrong mark for the leg to the finish allowing Wallis to take the win while he finished fifth further stretching the Wallis lead. At this stage it was still far from over, with Jones fighting back with a vengeance in race 16 and taking the win while Wallis had a poor performance picking up a 9th and with the additional drop kicking in the lead was shattered to 3.3 points.

At the same time a tussle had developed for third overall with WA's Roger Paul closing to just two points behind SA's Scott Mitchell and as the wind dropped for race 17 and became significantly shifty the pair struggled resulting in both ending up in B fleet for race 18. Jones and Wallis also found this race difficult and found themselves well behind the leaders however it was Wallis who had the edge over Jones to finish with a 7th while Jones finished 16th and fell to B fleet also.

With the final race to be sailed Wallis had a lead of 10.3 points which was enough to secure the championship. Jones came through B fleet and won the final race with Wallis finishing 7th but claiming the championship.

Third place was decided with Roger Paul failing to return from B fleet leaving Mitchell to take third overall while Brad Johnston slipped through to fourth and Paul finished fifth.

Race winners for the day were Mike Freebairn (R14), Sean Wallis (R15), Paul Jones (R16/R18) and Doug Allen (R17).

## **AUS IOM Championship Setup for a Huge Final Day**

As we head to the final day of the 2019 IOM Australian Championship we have an exciting battle brewing to determine who will lift the trophy at the end of the final day.

It was probably to be expected, the battle between Paul Jones and Sean Wallis and the final day is going to be a cracker!

Sean Wallis has retained his overnight lead from day two and will start the final day with a 6.3 point lead. In this fleet it's nothing, a strong performance by Jones on day three has seen him making his move toward a back to back championship while Wallis is doing all he can to defend his lead. In addition, South Australian Scott Mitchell is lingering in the background just 10 points behind Jones.

While the differences between the top skippers can seem significant, these can be closed down in a single race and leaves any of the top three in with a chance to claim victory.

Today's conditions saw the fleet sailing with B rigs to a top mark directly of shore and made it challenging for all skippers with the mark roundings extremely difficult resulting in numerous collisions and a record number of protests.

American, George Pedrick struggled through the day with trips to B & C fleet which has put pay to his aspirations of an AUS title win but he remains well in the top ten and will endeavour to make a move on the final day to improve his position.

Race winners for the day included WA's Robert Mews, Queenslander Grant Cooper from Gladstone, Tasmanian Mike Hickman and Paul Jones.

It is expected that conditions for tomorrow will be slightly lighter which will be ideal for the final showdown.

### **Aussie's Back on Top of AUS IOM Championship Day 2**

It took until late on day two before an Aussie finally overtook our American guests to top the leader board of the IOM Australian Championship with a new leader, WA's Roger Paul picking up after race eight before Sean Wallis took over after a win in race 9.



After the hot humid northerlies of day one, an overnight change saw the breeze shift to the

south for day two with the 71 competitors greeted with a cool southerly and overcast conditions for day two of the championship.

The wind strength varied considerably with moments of around 9-14 knots but then minutes later bullets across the course of up to 20 knots and above. Rig selection once again became critical with B rigs the chosen rig for the day as the breeze increased slightly. Race 6 saw some of the A fleet select C rigs but after the first leg the breeze died slightly and those with the C rig generally struggled resulting in relegation to B fleet and a return to B rigs for the latter races.

Queensland's Brad Johnston started the day well with 1, 2, 1 for the first three races of the day and had a quick rush into the top five overall and strengthens his position as a contender for the title in an endeavour to win the championship for the home state although this could not be maintained with a 16th & 29th in the fourth and fifth races of the day and see's him start in C fleet on day three. Johnston remains an outside chance currently sitting in sixth overall but he'll need to regain the dominance reflected in the am races.

West Australian Roger Paul although slow to start in the first race of the day showed good boat speed sailing his V10 to claim two race wins to take the overall championship lead after race 8 but with a 9th in race 9 he slipped back to third overall at the end of the day.

Fellow WA sailor, Sean Wallis, maintained his consistency with single digit scores (except for a slight blemish in race 6 with a trip to B fleet) and with a 2nd in race 7 and a win in race 9 has positioned himself at the top of the leader board 3.3 points ahead of American, George Pedrick. Pedrick struggled to find a race win today but still remains in second place overall scoring 8, 4, 5, 19, 6 for the day.

At the mid-way point there is certainly no individual sailor who has stepped up and dominated the championship and with just over 15 points separating first to seventh any one of these guys could find their way to the podium over the next two days.

Similar weather conditions are forecast for day three of the championship and if ever there was a day to make a move for the title tomorrow will be it.

### **Day One to USA at AUS IOM Australian Championship**

Was that the Star-Spangled Banner we could hear ringing out as we left the venue after day one of the 2019 Australian IOM Championship?



Pictured: George Pedrick & Gene Harris (USA)

A stellar performance by our overseas guest sees George Pedrick, from the USA, overnight leader of the championship after day one after scoring 2, 3, 6, 1 in the four races completed. Pedrick made the most of the tricky conditions which started with a NNW of around 10 knots shift into the NNE and increase slightly in the early afternoon but it was the gusts which regularly saw bows down on the downwind leg with places frequently changing.

While the fleet kicked off with A rigs by race two the B rigs started to appear but the questions continued as to what was the right rig to choose with one gust possibly seeing someone go from hero to zero and in the end most opted for B rigs for most of the day although during the lulls these were quite challenging.

Our defending champion, Paul Jones, started well with a win in his seeding race followed by a win in race two before falling victim to the gusty conditions in race 3 after opting to return to the A rig but is in striking distance to Pedrick and will no doubt step it up a gear over the coming days, although he'll now need to sail consistently well at the front of the fleet with already scoring two races which he will be hoping to discard as we reach the pointy end of the championship and certainly won't want to add another high score to the card. Jones finished the day with 1, 1, 13, 7 and is just three points behind Pedrick.

Victorian, Scott Fleming, with his new launched Plan B is currently third placed on nine points with Jones, scoring 1, 9, 3, 5 for the day and if he can maintain this consistency will be looking for a podium finish.

Sean Wallis (WA) and Mike Hickman (TAS) round out the top five with Wallis two points behind Jones and Fleming with Hickman a further point back.

The forecast for tomorrow will no doubt see B rigs out again with the breeze from the SSE around 12-17 knots before increasing to around 15-20 knots or more later in the day.