

## Big week of sailing ahead for NZL Optimist sailors

New Zealand's largest single class regatta of the year, the 2014 Toyota Optimist National Championships is about to commence at Manly Sailing Club on the Whangaparaoa Peninsula. Racing gets underway next Friday April 18, where 265 sailors from 5 countries will race up to 15 races over the five days of racing.



(Sailors awaiting the start of racing at the recent Interisland Regatta at Queen Charlotte Yacht Club in Picton)

For many sailors it will be more than a week of sailing and training. Before the main event commences, the Pre Nationals regatta ( 127 entries to date) will run at Manly this Saturday and Sunday 11-12 April. Next Wednesday and Thursday 16-17 April will see the NZL Optimist Yachting Trust National Interclub Teams racing Championship.

The future of the Opti class is looking strong in New Zealand with the fleet numbers at this event up by almost 100 boats from last year, with 2/3<sup>ds</sup> of the growth in numbers coming from the Green fleet.

During the National Championship the sailors will compete in two fleets – the “Green Fleet” ( 110 entries to date) for younger sailors who will have completed a learn to sail course and been sailing at

one of the 120 local grass roots yacht clubs around the country and who are learning the basics of Yacht Racing, and the "Open" fleet (155 entries to date) which include young sailors who are also found at grass roots clubs around the country. Sailors are eligible to sail if they have their 15<sup>th</sup> birthday during this calendar year or younger. Some of the Open fleet sailors will have completed a National Ranking series during summer and for them this regatta will be the basis of selection to a range of International Optimist class events around the world, including the North American Champs in Mexico, European Champs in Ireland and the World Championships in Argentina.

A number of New Zealand sailors attended the 2014 Australian Nationals held earlier this year in Melbourne, and now a record 30 Australian sailors are reciprocating for this event. These sailors are able to charter boats from local Optimist supplier, SailOne. Several local sailors have shown steady form across the season, including ranking regatta series leader Scott McKenzie from Kohimarama Yacht club in Auckland. Around 30% of the sailors in the event are Female.

The Optimist yacht: is the most widely sailed learn-to-sail and junior boat at yacht clubs in New Zealand and around the world. It was designed in 1947, is 2.36 metres long, is sailed in 120 countries around the world with an estimated 120,000 boats in existence worldwide. Nearly 80% of skippers of boats at the 2012 Olympics had reached an international level in the Optimist class, including current NZL sailing team members Peter Burling, Paul Snow-Hansen and Alex Maloney – certainly a goal for our young sailors to aspire to. An entry level boat can be purchased for less than \$1,000, with plentiful demand available to sell it on when the time comes.

The regatta: up to 15 races sailed in total with up to 3 sailed per day. Split into Open and Green fleet. The Open fleet of 150 boats will be split into two flights of 75 boats. The Open fleet will sail Qualifying and Final series races to find an eventual winner who is able to drop one or more of their worst race results. The principal race officers for the event, John and Linda Parrish have presided over a number of International regattas, including the 2012 Olympics.

Schedule of events:

Registration Thursday 17th April 1000 to 1700

Racing Friday 18th April 1100 3 races - Qualifying Series

Saturday 19th April 1100 3 races - Qualifying Series

Sunday 20th April 1100 3 races - Qualifying Series

Monday 21st April 1100 3 races - Final Series

Tuesday 22nd April 1000 3 races - Final Series followed by Prizegiving

The numbers:

265 sailors

Youngest sailor age 8

Largest Club Fleet attending 37 (Wakatere)

90 support and official boats on the water

260 volunteers and adult supporters, 120 of those on the water.

77 homes rented in the Manly area for the event

72 Hotel nights

22 Campervans/Tents in local school.

The club: Manly sailing club <http://www.manlysailingclub.org.nz/> is based in Big Manly Bay in Whangaparaoa with wonderful protected waters off the beach and large grassed park areas adjoining the club. The Manly sailing club is a vibrant club with a core of hardworking volunteers who will be supported by a large contingent of volunteers from various clubs around the region and country to ensure the event is both fun and safe.

The sponsor: Toyota New Zealand has been a generous supporter of this Grass roots National sailing events for many years, and their support is critical to the operation of the event. We are grateful for their ongoing support which helps our young sailors reach their dreams in the sport of Yachting.



(The Toyota tent in pride of place at the 2013 Optimist Nationals at Timaru)

The regatta results will be posted each day on the Manly sailing club website together with updates on the New Zealand Optimist class association facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/NZIODA> and the NZIODA website <http://www.optimist.org.nz/>

If you are interested in learning to sail and Optimist a directory of clubs around New Zealand can be found on the Yachting New Zealand website at <http://www.yachtingnz.org.nz/clubs>