

Unravelling the Opti Ranking System – Courtesy Of Murray’s Bay Sailing Club

Are you new to the open fleet and are hearing about Opti ranking regattas, the National Rankings, selections for travelling teams, NAMs, Europeans, and Worlds. What is it all about? How does it all work?

First thing to understand is that the Optimist class is supported in New Zealand by the New Zealand International Optimist Class Association (NZIODA). (www.optimist.org.nz). It is responsible for ensuring the New Zealand Optimist fleet is kept fair and even in terms of class measurement, and for promoting the class as the premier junior training sail boat. NZIODA, as well as every other Optimist association in every other country in the world, is affiliated to the international Association IODA (www.optiworld.org). They maintain standards across the globe, and coordinate the major events across the globe. The opti world (IODA) site is the place to go to see where all the upcoming international regattas are, access the NoR etc. (www.optiworld.org)

IODA Championships

The IODA world is divided in to regions. Oceania, Asia, Africa, Europe, North America and South America . Each of these has an annual “Continental” championship organised by IODA. Except in the case of Oceania; since 2011 this championship has been combined with the Asians. On top of all this is a World Championship.

Currently NZIODA is qualified to send teams to the IODA Asian, North American, European and World Championships each year, with teams of 7, 4 (may be increased to 6 by invitation), 4 and 5 sailors respectively. NZIODA is responsible for coordinating these teams, selecting coaches to travel with the teams, and acting as the conduit for organising entry forms, fees etc.

On top of these Continental and World championship teams to be selected, every year there is also a young development squad chosen to undertake a few days training in Noumea followed by the New Caledonia Nationals.

Ranking Regattas

There are normally 4 ranking regattas every season, this year NZIODA are trialling a 5th ranking regatta to give the South Islanders two ranking regattas :

- North Island Champs every November. Usually in Taupo, New Plymouth or Napier.
- Auckland Champs every Auckland Anniversary weekend, rotating around Auckland clubs.
- The Interislander Regatta, every February in Picton,
- The South Island Champs. This year in March in Nelson
- The National Championship at Easter.

Ranking Calculation

The scores from all regattas contribute to your end of season ranking.

However the ranking regattas before the National Championship only make up 40% of your final ranking, the remaining 60% comes from the Nationals.

So say you attend 3 Regattas before the Nationals, add the placing of your best 2 regattas. For example, for the first 3 regattas you place 12, 8, 15. Your ranking score prior to Nationals is $12 + 8 = 20$.

Or you place 11, 9, DNC. Your ranking score prior to Nationals is $11 + 9 = 20$.

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Now you race Nationals. Remember your final season ranking is equal to 60% of your Nationals placing plus 40% of your pre-Nationals average score over the two races that counted.

In the above examples, your pre nationals score is 20 which is an average of 10 over the two races that counted. Take 40% of this as the contribution to your final ranking = 4. Let's say you finish 10th at Nationals. Take 60% of that = 6. Then add the two $4 + 6 = 10$. Ten is your final ranking score for the season.

After each ranking regatta, the scores to date are published and colour coded by age: remember your opti age is determined by your age during the calendar year – so if you are 12 at the beginning of January and your birthday is 10th June your opti age is 13.

Travelling Team Selection

At Nationals Prize giving, these rankings are used to determine the announcement of those that have qualified for travelling teams except the Worlds, they are chosen purely on the nationals result. So, on this basis:

- The first 5 place getters at Nationals qualify for Worlds. This is irrespective of Rankings or gender.
- Now go to the rankings (including Nationals results) and exclude anyone that qualified for Worlds.
- The next 4 (6) now qualify for North Americans, the next 4 for Europeans and the next 7 for Asians.

There is another proviso here though. Each of these events (outside of the Worlds) will normally have a Notice of Race clause that will require at least 1, maybe 2 of any gender to be included in the team. This could mean that some people in the ranking could end up being skipped in order to meet this requirement.

Finally, the Noumean Development Team. The top five placed 12 year olds and the top five placed 11 year olds at the Nationals will be invited to join the Noumea Development Team, usually in December each year.

Note this selection is based on your Opti age at the Nationals – so 11 or 12 years old as at Dec 31st at the end of that year.

Easy.

So that is up to 32 individuals each year that can be selected to travel and represent NZIODA.

Final Note

Note that the IODA Continental and World championships talked about here are 'closed' events in that only teams nominated by the national authority can enter. But many other events exist that are open to all. E.g. Australian Nationals or State Champs, Singapore Nationals, New Caledonia Nationals to name but a few.

Now is the time to start setting your targets. Sail through the winter, hit the North Islands in November, and keep at it through to the Nationals.

Fine Print. This information is current at Oct 2014. Please check with NZIODA regarding any future detail.