

Still Number One!

In a star studded event that attracted sailors from seven different countries around the globe, the 2009 Australian National Moth Championships heralded Bladerider Team Sailor Nathan Outteridge from Gosford, NSW, as the overall winner.

Held in conjunction with Skandia Geelong Week, the regatta drew crowds to take in the spectacle that it was. A big congratulation's also goes to Sam England (VIC), who always gives the blokes a good run for their money! Not only did she win the Women's title, but successfully placed 15th amongst the 42 entrants. Finally two other Bladerider sailors Martin Cross (NSW) and Lochie Byrne (VIC) took out the Master and Junior Titles respectively.

Outteridge, who is also the current World Champion 49er sailor, only started sailing a Bladerider a few months ago, *"The first time I sailed the boat I was amazed at how quiet the boat was, that was until I crashed and there was white water everywhere. I only sailed the boat for about 20min but it was enough to get me hooked. I was in the middle of campaigning for the Olympics but said to myself that as soon as the Games are over, I would get a boat. Now I have had a boat for 3 months and it's going to be pretty hard to go back to any other boat now!"*

Before the Championship's, Outteridge had only ever sailed his Bladerider on his own from Wangi Sailing Club on Lake Macquarie, until he took a trip to Woollahra Sailing Club to tune against Scott Babbage and John Harris, a few weeks before the Moth National's. His potential was quickly realised by Babbage as Outteridge apparently easily won all six practice races.

Most surprisingly Outteridge's second hand Bladerider X8 had done the rounds in New Zealand for twelve months before he inherited it and it was absolutely stock standard. *"The boat was obviously fast so I didn't need to do anything special"* said Outteridge. However the one thing that he did do differently for the regatta was use the latest North Sail (MH7) on a slightly stiffer CST mast (353).

"I had only used this sail once before the event but it seemed to set up well so I decided to use this during the event. I found the sail very easy to set up and had great speed upwind in the strong winds (15-22kts). I used this sail in all races including the 4-7kts races that we had in the mornings. I was surprised at how well it worked in these marginal conditions I was able to foil at the same time as everyone else. All in all I would say I had the same if not better speed than the top guys in all conditions."

"Rohan was there to make sure that I had the correct setup and also to give me tips on how to sail the boat, but I really would like to thank Bladerider, CST and North Sails for all their help over the last few weeks" Outteridge explained. There is no doubt two times Moth World Champion Rohan Veal had helped optimise the boat and the rig for Outteridge, but when it all boiled down to it, it was Outteridge's sheer skill that gave him the victory.

"I think the reason I won the Nationals was that I sailed a very consistent regatta and made very few mistakes. My results showed this with many of my places being 2nd's. I was getting better every day and by the last race felt very comfortable in the boat and finally blasted off and took a long awaited win" Outteridge said. This is no different to Harris' victory in the last Moth World Championships where Harris had a string of second places and one first place towards the end of the series.

Veal commented after the regatta that "Outteridge was never meant to win Aussie Nationals, the only goal I had set him before it all started was to just win one race! I was so happy for him that he did this as it shows that Nathan not only has the talent in this class but our standard production boats still have the pace amongst all the latest designs. However I was obviously completely overwhelmed to see that he also took the overall title with him as well."

Outteridge went on to say "I had an awesome time at the Moth National's, it reminded me why I started sailing. The Moth is a unbelievable boat to sail, the competition was tight and I really enjoyed the style of racing. The other great thing about the event was the people involved, everyone was so friendly and welcoming. I will be back again to do more events for sure."

Outteridge is now set to race at the Moth World Championships in Oregon USA later this year, just after he heads to Sardinia in June to compete in his first Farr 40 worlds, after which he'll head straight to Lake Garda to compete in the 49er Worlds where he will defend his title. Luckily though, he'll have two weeks break before heading to the Moth Worlds mid August. Phew!



Nathan Outteridge wins Australian title.



Sam England wins Women's title.

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