

## 2019 Raceboard Nationals – Myall Lakes 20-23 January

A big jump in youth and female sailor numbers has been a feature of the 2019 Raceboard Nationals at Myall Lakes in NSW.

The event (20-23 of January) was held with the Formula Nationals, and attracted a combined fleet of 47 boards, including 35 Raceboards - up from the previous year in Brisbane where 29 boards competed.

The Raceboard Overall trophy was lifted by Brisbane-based Julien Savina, who has competed in Mistral and RSX World Championships for his native France, and trialed for French Olympic selection for Athens. Julien finished best-placed Australian in the recent Windfoil Oceanics. But he didn't have it all his own way, with strong performances from defending champion Cam Harrison, and rising star Grae Morris, who notched up 4 wins and sailed well beyond his 15 years. Grae took out the NSW Raceboard Titles this season, and came second in the Australian Youth Championships in Hobart on the Bic Techno Plus.



Keeping it in the family, Grae's dad Brett Morris took out the Formula event, from Leo Sharp and Rick Murray.

Grae was one of the 11 sailors under 21 years of age competing in the Raceboards, a big increase on youth numbers of previous years. And in another advance, six women competed in Raceboards, with another two battling it out in the Formula.

Across the two fleets, there were also seven sailors over 60, proving the growing appeal of the sport across the demographics.

There was some close racing in the 8.5m fleet, but youth sailor Vaughn O'Shea dominated the pointy end, winning all but two races. Max Irvine (Youth, RQYS) was second, with Tony Matta (Grand Master, Lake Cootharaba) third. Hailey Lea (Lake Cootharaba), who was third youth overall, came in fourth, and was the first female in 8.5m.

Conditions were predominantly light, with lots of sore hands and blisters to attest to the number of pumping races. Thirteen of a possible 15 races were achieved, whilst the Formula fleet did a lot more beach-sitting, with five races completed across the four days.

Thanks go to our PRO, John O'Brien, who volunteered his time to travel from Brisbane to manage the racing. He worked seamlessly with mark boat skipper Craig Ferris, and was assisted by volunteers Karen Murden, Conor Coleman, Brad Younger and Sue Plodr. Great photos from David "Belly" Bell. Posting updates was tricky given the lack of connectivity, but the location was very picturesque and it was a great venue for social events, with virtually everyone on site together.

Next year the Nationals will be in Brisbane, at RQYS. Dates will be confirmed shortly.

