

IFAA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

29th October 2025

As we launched into the 2024-25 season there was excitement about the prospect of sailing at Lake Garda. Several new teams purchased boats and were participating in events.

Unusual weather plagued the 2024-25 season. Fireballs were fortunate comparatively, in that we managed to get regattas completed, but two events in our calendar were completed with only 2 races:

- The National Championship at Eden, in Feb 2025, was the most disappointing in this regard, with 2 very light races completed on day 2. Days 1, 3 and 4 were blown out with no racing. Tom Gillard and Andy Thompson won after well calculated tactics saw them come back from mid fleet to the front in race 1. The name of their boat that they bought after the 2024 World Championship stayed in the theme of "Expensive Event"! Brendan Garner and Ben O'Brien sailed very consistently to take out the Australian Champion title, finishing just behind Tom and Andy overall.
- The Cairn Curran Sailing Club - one of the IFAV iconic country camping events was also completed with only 2 races in November 2024. It included a weird mini-tornado that ripped along the water line picking up and throwing boats in the process of launching around. It was less than a 20m wide path of devastation! Tents 50m up the hill were fine - go figure! Then on day 2 of the regatta - no wind!

State Titles held in Victoria and South Australia had better luck with the weather and created a good meeting point for fleets to get together. Victorian States, sailed bayside at Sandringham Yacht Club saw some very tight competition. Countback was required to separate 1st and 2nd place with Heather Macfarlane / Chris Payne winning from Sophie Jackson / Andrew Perry. South Australian State Titles were sailed across 2 weekends at Adelaide Sailing Club in November 2024 and Brighton Seacliff Yacht Club in March 2025. Small fleets and tight competition saw racing go down to the wire and the experience sailing together plus time on the water saw Jalina Pivetta (née Thompson-Kambas) / Nathan Stockley take out the title from up and coming team Jess De La Perrelle and James Gaskell.

Focus of IFAA for 2025 was #MFSMO: More Fireballs Sailing More Often.



Many sailors contributed to generating social media posts incorporating [#MFSMO](#). Top contributors ranged from Lyndon Zimmerman who was new to the class in SA at the start of the season through to the winner and now seasoned fireball sailor Jaemie Wilson.

The final event of the season was the Inaugural Fireball Youth National Championship held in conjunction with the Yachting Victoria Western Region Easter Regatta at Lake Bullen Merri. Of the 18 fireballs competing from 3 different states, 10 were Youth teams. Camping together was great fun. The weather was kind with each of the 3 days having different wind conditions, covering light air to strong breezes.

Youth Nationals Results were as follows:

- 1st Josh Garner / Ben O'Brien
- 2nd Calin Went / Chris Went
- 3rd Ben Garner / Sam Williamson - 1st Double Youth
- 4th Ben Schulz / Matilda Schulz
- 5th Charley Stevens / Will Farnell - 2nd Double Youth
- 6th Imogen Farnell / Finn Buckley - 3rd Double Youth

We hope to see most if not all of these teams in fireballs more regularly and welcome the fun they bring to the regatta. The 2nd Youth National Championship is at Indented Head on 21st and 22nd March 2026.

To conclude, 2024-25 was a successful season, in terms of interest levels with a moderate level of translation to sailors on the water. The interest generated from the Geelong World Championships and the translation of that interest into 17 Aussie boats competing at Lake Garda in the 2025 World Championships is exciting. Based on the social media reports the majority of Aussie participants in Garda took the opportunity to add fantastic holidays to their Worlds participation. Please continue to support the class by attending the events, contributing on social media and engaging with newer members at your club at events and on social media.

I hope to see you all at the Nationals in Adelaide on Monday 2nd Feb - Friday 6th Feb in 2026!

John Heywood
President
IFAA