

Media Release

For Immediate Release

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Blind Match Racing Round Robin Continues

A steady 15-16 knot easterly greeted the blind and vision impaired sailors competing in the IFDS Blind Match Racing Championships at Royal Perth Yacht Club today. Eight more matches of the first round robin were completed before the wind softened and racing was finally abandoned mid afternoon.

"The conditions this morning have been ideal for match racing and enabled the sailors to really show their skills", observed Chief Umpire Founette Pauthier from France.

"We had some interesting matches with boats really duelling - using rules and tactics to gain an advantage over their competitors. Boats were holding their opponents out, preventing them from entering, some were circling, and boats holding head to wind and maintaining control. These sailors are really showing their skills now", said Pauthier.

The IFDS Blind Match Racing Championship is being sailed in Sonar keelboats using the Homerus Autonomous Sailing system of acoustic buoys. Each mark has a unique signal to define the course and boats have their own sound signal that changes when on port or starboard tack.

Three teams now have four wins in the bag – Vicki Sheen (GBR) has four from four, Luigi Bertanza (ITA) has four from five and Russell Lowry (NZL) has four from six. Bertanza and Sheen will meet in the last match of round one tomorrow.

Sheen, from Brixham in South Devon, is pleased with her current placing and looking forward to the next days' racing.

"It has been brilliant to come here and put in to practice all the training we have been doing at home", said Sheen, who has been training with her crew under UKSA coach Niall Myant in Cowes. She also competed in the Italian Blind Match Racing Championships in Tuscany last October as part of her preparation.

"The event here in Perth has been really well organised. There has been great support from the club for competitors and the racing has been very professionally run with good courses, quality umpiring and nice breezes", she said.

Conditions over the next few days are promising and organisers are confident they will be able to complete two round robins and a finals series before the event concludes next Saturday.

For more information about the event, visit www.rpyc.com.au/index.php?id=121

ENDS

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Photo Captions:

1. Blind Match Racing underway on Matilda Bay. Gimeno (ESP) v Forth (AUS).
2. Off to a good start on day two. Gimeno (ESP) v Sheen (GBR).
3. Sheen, Donnini & Manning (GBR) at work in Perth.
4. Bertanza, Malapiero & Bardella (ITA) in action.