

New Zealand ILCA (Laser) Nationals 2022

An extremely successful 2022 ILCA (Laser) Nationals was held from 19th to 23rd January 2022 at Queen Charlotte Yacht Club, Picton in the Marlborough Sounds at the top of the South Island . We were incredibly lucky to be able to hold the regatta, with new government Omicron restrictions, which would probably have prevented us sailing, coming into force the day after racing was completed.

92 sailors from Youths to Great Grand Masters completed the scheduled 10 races in three fleets; ILCA 7 (Open and Masters), ILCA 6 Open (Youth, Open and Women) and ILCA 6 Masters. The standard of racing in all fleets was excellent, with close contests right through each fleet and no placing ever safe on the water in the generally fresh conditions. We had different breezes every day, with the winds generally gusting to 15 to 20 knot every day, but boxing the compass over the 4 days. Being almost landlocked the sound provided plenty of challenges with shifts and pressure variations common but with enough waves to make the downwind legs interesting.



1 World ILCA 7 Champion Tom Saunders in action

Standout performances of the regatta were reigning World Champion Tom Saunders, who led the ILCA 7's from beginning to end, and leading Youth Caleb Armit, who finished with a perfect 9 point score in the ILCA 6's. Neither of these sailors had it all their own way however. In the ILCA 7 George Gautrey, who was 3rd in the worlds in 2019, certainly kept Tom honest, winning 3 races and finishing just 4 points adrift of him in the final results. Luke Cashmore, Luke Deegan and Samoan Olympic rep Eroni Leilua rounded out the top 5. All had standout races but struggled to match the consistency of Tom and George. Thomas Mulcahy in 6th overall was the winner of the U21 trophy.



2 Women winner Greta Pilkington off to a good start in ILCA 6 fleet

In the ILCA 6's Open sailor George Lane managed to take one race off Caleb. George, second Youth (and 3rd overall) Dylan Forsyth and the top 4 women were all very close and kept Caleb on his toes. The contest between the top 4 women was also a highlight of regatta, with U21 Greta Pilkington, who has just moved up from the Youth ranks, eventually securing the Womens title from Annabelle Rennie-Younger, defending champ Olivia Christie and local Emily Overend. The leading Youth girl was Teagan Denny, who enjoyed the conditions while the Youth girls generally finding the pace of the top women tough to match.

In the ILCA 7 Masters, who raced with the Open fleet, the top 3 sailors were cut above the rest in the Picton conditions. GM and many times top master Andrew Dellabarca again put together a great series to take out a closely fought overall Masters title from past champion and leading Master Kris Decke and leading Apprentice from just over the hill in Nelson, Tim Pitcaithly. It was great to see quiet a few new faces in the masters fleet, many encouraged to enter by the associations offer of a free entry to any sailor who had not competed in a Laser (ILCA) nationals for at least 10 years. Standouts from this group were Apprentices Mike Terry from Nelson and local Sam Edwards, who were consistently near the front of the Masters fleet. Leading GGM was Nick Page, who much to his surprise managed to finish in the top half of the combined 41 boat fleet in 18th overall.

In the ILCA 6 Masters, who raced as a separate fleet, Apprentice Phil Wild dominated, winning the title with a race to spare. He was followed by the ever consistent Master Ed Tam in second and leading GM Werner Hennig in 3rd. 4th overall the GGM Pete Thomas, who managed not only to take out both the first and last races of the regatta but also to pick up a new sail as a spot prize at prize giving! Leading Masters woman was class stalwart Helen Spencer from Hamilton, who found the conditions to her liking and was celebrating beating GGM Gill Waiting and Hamilton teammate Lucia Chagas.

[Overall the 2022 ILCA Nationals will be remembered as an outstanding success. A fantastic venue, enthusiastic club, large fleets, excellent but variable conditions, extremely close racing and fully](#)

deserving champions in every division made this one to remember. Next year will be at Murrays Bay Sailing Club in Auckland so we look forward to a large fleet and a resumption of the excellent competition there. Hopefully we will see our borders fully reopen by then and will again be welcoming international sailors to join us as well.

Full Results can be found on the NZLA webpage, nzlaser.org.

Nick Page