World Masters -
Japanese Always the Best!

There were 36 entries in this year's World Masters. Miyuki K'ai's name remained on the entry and scoring sheets and there was a moment of silence at the Skipper’s meeting to honour him. The eldest participant at 86 years young was Renato Bruno from Italy.

The weather for the week was hot, humid and there was not a lack of wind. There were capsizes and some equipment breakage. The first race was completed with an average of 14 knots. The comments from the sailors was that there was no pattern to the waves, they were difficult to read. The second race was shortened to finish on the second windward mark due to the increasing wind, with gusts from 18 – 49 kt. Japans Shiro Uemura and crew Junichiro Shiraishi had the course conquered with two firsts followed by Takeyasu Sugiyama and Hirotaka Kaneda had two seconds.

On Thursday the wind average was stronger and only one race was completed as the wind would have been over the maximum 15 knots that is allowed in the Masters. Ryszuek Abe and Akinori Yamashita were first, Naoki Inoue and Shinnichi Uchida were second.

As we had only completed 3 races the Race Committee made the decision to race on the lay day starting at 10 am, instead of the usual 1. We made it to the race course with rain and an increasing wind. The skies got darker and we heard a rumble of thunder, the PRO Katsumi Okamura sent everyone in which turned out to be the correct decision as the rain came pouring down and the wind disappeared.

On Saturday strong winds with the favour of the day averaging 12 – 15 knots. This day the race was mastered by Augie Diaz and Kate Sheehan with Shiro Uemura and Junichiro Shiraishi in second. With one gust recorded at 20 knots only one race was completed.

On the final day with the race time altered to 10 am with the hope of getting 2 races in. The wind was down compared to the rest of the week. The winds averaged 5 – 10 knots with Grand Master Saburo Sato and Takamasa Shimagu taking race five and Master Seiji Koga with crew Hiroyuki Iwamoto winning the last race.

The big winner was Apprentice Master Takeyasu Sugiyama and his crew Hirotaka Kaneda, Augie Diaz and Kate Sheehan prevailed in the Master division, Kazonori Kawakami and Shinichi Kawakami were the Grand Master winners. For the first time there was a new division called Legend for those 75 years old and above. This was won by Brazil’s Bibi juven and crew Beno Bianchi with Italy’s Renato Bruno and son Dario Bruno in second and Japan’s Koichi Murakami and Masaharu Nishida in third.

As with all World Masters the onshore activity was as important as that on the water; serious fun takes priority at this Championship. We had opening ceremonies after race events such as visits by Samurai and the Fukuoka University Drum Band. There were lunches every day and bread and food in the evenings. Many sailors opting for the traditional Japanese food. The legendary Japanese hospitality was evident every second of every day. You had a question it was answered promptly and with a smile. One cannot say enough about the organization of the event, which was excellent. There were numerous young people there every working day so hard to ensure the regatta was a success.

There was discussion with the sailors, many offering ideas and suggestions for the Class. One suggestion promoted by the older members of the fleet was that the World Masters should only be held in tropical climates so both the water and air are warm, which was the case in Japan. The trophy presentation was another successful evening closing out 2014 Id Crook Memorial World Masters Championship. Knowing my father’s philosophy about the World Masters I know he would have thoroughly enjoyed this regatta and the great hospitality of our Japanese hosts.

I hope we shall all meet again in two years at the next World Masters, wherever they are.

--Gwethen Crook

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