

Salt Spring Island Sailing Junior Race Team Competes at 2024 Fall Dinghies Regatta by Anna Pugh

A record number of Salt Spring Sailing Club junior sailors attended the 2024 Fall Dinghies regatta, recently held at Royal Victoria Yacht Club. With stronger winds than many of the sailors had previously experienced, spectators on shore saw lots of brave work for the boats to stay upright, along with a couple of spectacular capsizes into the cold waters of the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

Louis Demandre, Phil Pugh Aucoin, and Lochlan O'Dwyer had their first regatta experience in the Opti Green Fleet, a group for first-time racers. Each sailor put in a consistent effort on the first day of sailing, where they raced multiple heats over a modified version of the competitive course. On the second day, high winds forced the Green Fleet further into the more sheltered waters of Cadboro Bay.

Meanwhile, *Luci Pugh Aucoin* and *Aoi Otsu* raced in the Opti Championship Fleet. Both had several good races against 47 other boats, and each showed confidence and improvement from previous regattas. The high winds and large number of competitors created challenging conditions. Luci had a personal best, coming in 11th in her second race of the regatta.



In the Club 420 class, *Malikaa Clement* and *Maeve FitzZaland* had a great first day on the Saturday, with consistent finishes in the top three out of a field of 17 boats. The other 420 team of *Izzi Pugh Aucoin* and *Reuben Sol* were sailing well, but an unfortunate disqualification in one race left them needing to have a strong second day of racing. On Sunday, in very high winds, Pugh Aucoin and Sol managed first and second place finishes in every race, and ultimately won the regatta for the second year running. (Top photo below by Josh Good.)



Clement and FitzZaland suffered a collision and capsized in their final race, leaving them in fourth place overall.



After the awards ceremony, the 420 sailors expressed their appreciation for their coach, *John Hillier*, along with guest coaches *Douglas Woolcock* and *Stephane Aucoin*. The Opti racers received support preparing for the regatta from junior coaches *Izzi Pugh Aucoin* and *Reuben Sol*, and the whole junior team has benefitted from the ongoing support of the Salt Spring Island Sailing Club. Next up for the 420 teams is the Pumpkin Bowl at the end of October, in the frigid waters of the Salish Sea.



Note: SISC sailors are flying the purple/ yellow and pink spinnakers.

Look for more photos on our Club Flickr page soon.

