



MEDIA RELEASE

19 DECEMBER 2013

World Champion Florian Gruber takes out inaugural Kiteracing Oceanic Championships

Western Australia: Current Course Racing World Champion, German Florian Gruber, has been crowned the inaugural Kiteracing Oceanic Championships winner. The laid-back 19-year-old won convincingly, taking out all but three races in the five-day competition at Leighton Beach, Fremantle.

Hot on his heels all week, 16-year-old current European Champion, Oly Bridge from Devon in the UK, claimed second place, while Italy's Riccardo Leccese claimed third, despite Poland's Blazej Ozog making a last minute run for the position.

Two Australians finished in the top 10 - WA's Torvar Mirsky and Ric Black from NSW. Black also took out the Masters award.

Gruber, who won a A\$5000 first prize cheque and 100 Championship points, said he was super happy.

"It was good to win the last race, and now I'll party. I do enjoy the light wind a bit more, but I trained more in strong winds and now have the perfect package.

"This event is so nice, so well organised, everything about it is great - the location, the conditions. I've a few days now before I fly home, so I'm super relaxed."

Bridge finished the race and event with a solid second place, 21 points clear of Leccese in third. He showed great focus throughout the regatta, consistently making sure that Gruber wasn't allowed to go free and sail his own races.

"Each race I didn't try any flash tactics, just tried to beat Florian," Bridge said. "It was a great event; I'm feeling good."

Throughout the competition, there has been fierce competition between Poland's Aga Grzyska and France's Ariane Imbert but Grzyska proved too strong, winning all three of Sunday's Women's races and 11 of 17 overall, relishing the lighter winds. Spain's Nuria Goma placed third and top Australian female kiter was Lisa Hickman from Queensland placing fourth.

It was a big personal win for Grzyska. "This is the first time I have won an international event – it's a big thing for me," she said.

"I had plenty of worries going into the final races that I would drop my kite and get second place, but I was really happy with my racing."

The top 10 men competed in four races on Sunday and six women contested three races on the Indian Ocean. The course was shortened to produce tight sprint races. In the lightest winds of the week, 17m to 19m kites were the order of the day.



The battle was on between Gruber, Bridge and Blazej Ozog in the first medal race. Bridge looked like taking the win until Gruber took advantage of a wind shift, and light wind master Maks Zakowski whipped into second. A hectic downwind sprint to the finish ensured with barely anything between the riders. Zakowski drove hard but Gruber managed to score the day's first bullet.

Showing great tenacity, Bridge took out the second medals race of the day holding off Gruber who finished in second, and Ozog in third. The three were sailing their own race well ahead of the rest of the pack.

The fleet spread out in the third Men's Medal race with a slight drop in wind. Gruber, who trains primarily in light air on Austrian lakes, put on a masterclass in low wind kiteracing, finishing 90 seconds before Bridge.

In the fourth and final race on Sunday with nothing to lose, Leccese shot out to sea on port at the start and by the top mark found himself third behind the routine Gruber/Bridge formation. In 6kn winds Gruber displayed technical superiority romping home and clearly in a jovial mood, went for a victory handlepass in front of the beach.

Racers competed in scorching 40-degree heat, and light winds between 6kn and 8kn creating tough race conditions on Sunday.

A total of A\$30,000 in prizemoney was presented to winners placed 1 to 10 in the Men's division and 1 to 4 in the Women's contest.

The Kiteracing Oceanic Championships will return to Fremantle in early December 2014 and is officially sanctioned by the International Kiteboarding Association (IKA) and the International Sailing Federation (ISAF).

The State Government through Tourism Western Australia is a proud supporter of the Championships.

For more information visit <http://kiteoceanics.com> or the event [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages. Join in the conversation with the hashtag [#KiteOceanicsWA](#) and [#L2L](#)

Top 3 Men overall:

1. Florian Gruber (Germany) 16 pts
2. Olly Bridge (Great Britain) 33 pts
3. Riccardo Leccese (Italy) 54 pts

Top 3 Women overall:

1. Aga Grzymska (Poland) 24 pts
2. Ariane Imbert (France) 36 pts
3. Nuria Goma (Spain) 70 pts

U21:

1. Florian Gruber (Germany)
2. Olly Bridge (UK)
3. Maks Zakowski (Poland)

Masters (35 and over)

1. Ric Black (Australia)
2. Ejder Ginyol (Turkey)
3. Alty Frisby (Australia)

Media contact: Janine Pittaway +61 (0)418 911 796, jpittaway@brightcommunications.com.au

Photo downloads from each day's racing are available from:
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/db3vd8x7dmvtgod/OfT2i1Pklu>

Vision can be downloaded through Filezilla or an FTP site using the following information:

Host: [ftp.icarusportsmedia.com](ftp://ftp.icarusportsmedia.com)

Username: oceanic@icarusportsmedia.com

Password: **oceanic.2013**

Please select Day 5 - Sunday