



SYDNEY FLYING SQUADRON LTD

Australia's oldest open boat sailing club
Founded in 1891

THE RINGTALE

SFS RACE REPORT SATURDAY 19 OCTOBER 2026 HEAT 1 MARK FOY DAY SPRING SERIES

LIGHT DAY AND (ALMOST) ALL-GIRL CREW NEARLY STEAL THE RACE



A cool, wet morning soon dissolved into a bright sunny day for the first race of the 26/27 season. By midday, the sky had cleared completely, but with hardly a breath of wind to look forward to. It was definitely going to be a big sail day but from which direction the wind was going to settle was anyone's guess. A nor-wester was predicted but by the time the fleet set off from the ramp, it was south east at Kirribilli and hinting at a nor-easter up past Bradleys. It was going to be a serious challenge for Steve Kidson, our starter, to pick a course.

Sensibly, the starter made the best decision possible. Start at Kirribilli on the easterly no. 2 course meaning that wherever the breeze settled, we would start as close as possible to Careening Cove and hopefully have an upwind leg ... somewhere on the course.



It was just as well that a Kirribilli starting line was set. In the light and variable breeze, some of the skiffs were slow off the beach and would never have reached the start by their allotted start time had not the starter, with rare generosity, postponed the start, less because of the breeze than to give the slow coaches a chance. (Note to skippers: it would be unwise to rely on the starter's largesse in future. Part of the race itself is to get to the start on time. You need to allow for the conditions, the course and the location of the start line and leave the beach early. As we have often noted, it also gives you time to observe the conditions, finalise any last-minute rig tuning and significantly reduce anxiety in the crew).

With all boats away, the long upwind leg up to Shark Island was all about finding the breeze. Some saw a bit of compression on the northern shore but soon ran out of breeze. Others headed out into the main channel hoping that the last of the ebb tide might help. As it turned out, it did not much matter which way you went since by the Shark Island lighthouse, the leaders had all bunched up together. Yendys, last away off her scratch handicap, did best having picked the breeze backing out of the south-east and ending up a nor-easter once past Bradleys Head. Yendys actually managed the leg entirely on a port tack and made up considerable ground on the rest.



These photos with thanks to Barley Stewart on the Fergie





These photos with thanks to Barley Stewart on the Fergie



Top Weight, with Eloise Clarke on the helm in her first race with the “all girl” crew had done well and was first around the Island. She was followed by Aberdare (Michael Carter - whose previously strong female representation had jumped ship and moved to Top Weight), Tangalooma (Neville Turbit), Scot (Dave Paget), The Mistake (Jerry Tickner), Myra Too (looking great on her first outing for many seasons with Warren “Wazza” Miller skippering), the ever-present Australia IV (Terry Stewart) and, bringing up the rear, Yendys (with Barry “Bazza” Watson down from his Queensland hinterland once more, and back on the stick).

It is worth noting that Myra Too showed some serious competitive spirit in setting a port kite in the short run from the Shark Island lighthouse to the rounding mark and gained ground in the light nor-easter. For one reason or another, she did not gybe. Yendys, however, chose to set up for a quick starboard pole (having set-up and re-set several times on the way up in the changing breeze) and then charged through the fleet to take the lead.



Myra Too in action - photos with thanks to MVS

It was very shy though, and Yendys was soon heading for Point Piper instead of Kirribilli until she ran out of breeze and watched Top Weight and Aberdare retake the lead to windward.

If you attended the Bucko presentations, you might have learned about the importance of attached flow on your sails, especially jib and spinnakers, in light breezes. Well, on board Yendys, Bucko insisted on holding on to the big kite no matter what and despite a gybe or two, Yendys succeeded in carrying the spinnaker almost into the wind, until the emergence of the nor-westerly breeze dictated otherwise. By this time, Yendys, in third place, was being dragged into Shell Cove and approximately 2 minutes behind Top Weight and Aberdare out in the main channel but struggling for good breeze.

As the nor-westerly strengthened, Yendys was able to tighten up and head for the line (the course had been shortened) at speed and lifting up under both Top Weight and Aberdare to take the gun (a horn actually on Rippleside) by over 3 minutes from Top Weight and with Aberdare only 20 seconds behind in third place. They were followed by Australia IV, The Mistake, Scot, Myra Too and Tangalooma.



*Our SFS Start Boat volunteers on Rippleside
(which is generously made available to us by Woody – Many thanks Woody!)*



These photos with thanks to MVS



There was quite a buzz back at the clubhouse (looking resplendent in her opening day bunting) when it was noted with applause that the (nearly) all-girl crew had finished second and nearly won. Eloise and her crew are to be congratulated on a wonderful effort on a really difficult day. There was some talk that their honorary girl whisperer, Mike “Chappo” Chapman, might have been some help.



These photos thanks to Selwyn Black

Wherever possible on the day, the skiffs all carried a trainee from the Sail Back in Time program that has been a great success. Stephanie (choosing Top Weight over Yendys), Christina and Victoria (Top Weight), Walter and Vanessa (Scot), Gordon (Australia IV), William (Mistake) and Stephen (Aberdare) – with apologies for any names missed, all experienced their first skiff race and will, we are sure, be back for more. There was, it has to be said, plenty of advice over drinks on the deck from the old salts that it is a very different experience, but no less fun, when the breeze gets up.

So, a great start to the season with 8 boats out on the Harbour. Australia’s repairs should be completed shortly meaning that we can be looking forward to a fleet of 9 boats before Alruth’s repairs are completed.

It’s on again next Saturday and make sure that you mark your diary for the following weekend when we shall be sailing on a Sunday at the Balmain Regatta where the after-race party is not to be missed!

Final results can be found in SailSys: <https://app.sailsys.com.au/club/15/profile?tab=results>

RACE 1, SPRING SERIES HEAT 1, MARK FOY DAY

10 October 2026 · handicap start, scratch boat away at 2.30pm

BOAT	HANDICAP (MINS)	SKIPPER	FINISH	SAILING TIME	HANDICAP PLACE	SCRATCH PLACE
Yendys	0	Barry Watson	16:00:55	1:30:55	1	1
Top Weight	14	Eloise Clarke	16:04:21	1:48:21	2	4
Aberdare	8	Michael Carter	16:04:42	1:42:42	3	2
Australia IV	6	Terry Stewart	16:10:48	1:46:48	4	3
The Mistake	14	Jerry Tickner	16:11:33	1:55:33	5	5
Scot	12	David Paget	16:20:45	2:02:45	6	7
Myra Too	11	Warren Miller	16:21:12	2:02:12	7	6
Tangalooma	12	Neville Turbit	16:31:22	2:13:22	8	8



Winner on the day – Yendys. Photos thanks to MVS



These photos with thanks to MVS





Get your body to the Squaddie!

SYDNEY FLYING SQUADRON LTD

Australia's oldest open boat sailing club
76 McDougall St, Kirribilli NSW 2061