SYDNEY FLYING SQUADRON LTD

Australia's oldest open boat sailing club
Founded in 1891

THE RINGTALE

SFS RACE REPORT: HEAT 4 – SPRING SERIES

SATURDAY 31ST OCTOBER 2026

ABERDARE BACK TO HER BEST



Aberdare crossing the finish line - Image thanks to SFS CEO Rolf Cohen

13 knots from the north, gusting to 16 knots, was the prediction. And who was to argue with that when we were looking at a weather map with regular gradient lines on the back of a high pressure system slowly making its way into the Tasman?

But by late morning, it was clear that this was to be another odd day. It was hot out west under the mountains and cool on the Harbour. And the breeze was oscillating NW to NE and showing some strength in the upper harbour east of Bradleys. In the old days, before our weather apps of today, on days like these, skippers would drive up to Bradleys Head before the race before heading back for a final sail selection. Not a bad plan …

The wise heads in the Park had decided that a bit of caution was warranted. A reef and no.3 jib was the go. And just as well too, since the breeze did come in when it backed to the NW and made the first run down from the Beashel Buoy more difficult than it needed to be for some.

Sadly, Myra Too (Warren Miller) had only made it just out of Careening Cove when problems with the mainsheet meant a DNS and early showers.

With the start line set at the head of Double Bay, Top Weight was first away led by Eloise Clarke and her team of Valkyries who would face up to new challenges on a day where there was a lot more in the breeze than in the previous races. The Mistake (Jerry Tickner) and Tangalooma (Neville Turbit) were next away followed by Aberdare (Michael Carter) and Australia IV (Terry Stewart). Off scratch and giving the A4 no less than 8 minute's start was Yendys (Michael van Stom).

The large run-out tide and plenty of north in the breeze meant a fast work up to the Beashel Buoy. The Mistake had got away well, but once around seemed to struggle with her spinnaker on the way down to Shark Island. The following skiffs, after being unsure whether to set port or starboard poles, decided to leave the kites in the bag as the breeze began to blow harder with plenty of westerly gusts. By the time that A4 reached the mark, the breeze had strengthened and a gybe was out of the question. Even pulling away had its challenges. This enabled Yendys to pass A4 after rounding and heading off in the direction of Bradleys on starboard to keep the boat under control. This soon proved to be less fruitful than it was for A4 that managed to stay low on the way to Steele Point having set a kite and making up good ground on Yendys that had to make two more grannies to be able to round the Island a minute behind A4.

Grannies were the order of the day in the conditions. But these too can go wrong as Scot discovered ahead of the Shark Island Gybe mark. While rounding up, she suffered a graceful demise and was rescued by our volunteers who made the short tow to the Edwards to enjoy the hospitality (and the rum) of our mates there to bail her out and head for home.



Scot in recovery at RPEYC – photo thanks to Stewart (who reportedly also enjoyed some of the local hospitality)



Top Weight (with Scot under tow back to the clubhouse) - Image thanks to Barley Stewart

Meanwhile, Top Weight continued to play it safe and although now trailing the fleet, was sailing well in the difficult conditions.

At the first rounding of Shark Island, The Mistake led Aberdare by 2 minutes followed by Tangles, a minute behind. Then came A4 and Yendys with Top Weight at the tail.

The second lap saw The Mistake do well, although picking the shifts was far from easy and with the new rounding mark being Chowder Bay North, there was a bit further to go as well. Aberdare showed her class and was soon in the lead after rounding. Yendys had also done well using the ebb tide to her advantage in the oddly calmer waters out in the middle of the stream. Odd because we all know that wind against tide in anything from the north usually means rough water out in the middle.

Around the Chowder Bay mark and Yendys set a small peak-head kite for the run across to Shark Island. Even with the better angle now from the Chowder Bay North mark, this is usually a fast tight run in a NE breeze. But it was much closer to square on this occasion due to the north in the breeze. Aberdare and The Mistake had rounded by the time that Yendys put in a messy gybe at the mark that had crew and spectators with their hearts in their mouths.



Yes, they did survive that. Photo thanks to Rolf Cohen

Having survived that, Yendys set off after Mistake and Aberdare that had declined a spinnaker. The NNW in the breeze and the fact that the PRO had set a finish line towards the north, rather than the south of Clark Island gave Yendys a very tight but fast run to the finish, doing at least three to one on the run against Aberdare. A little more runway and Aberdare would have been easy meat. But Flipper's judgement paid off and Aberdare got the gun by 35 seconds from Yendys with The Mistake only a minute behind. Tangalooma was fourth followed by A4, suffering under a shortage of sail area.

Last, but by far the most popular finisher was Top Weight and the cheers as she crossed the line, having sailed the course and having kept the fleet in sight, was for a great effort indeed. Sailing these skiffs is no easy task and most yachtsmen, with the forgiving lead in their keel would struggle to do nearly as well as Eloise and he Valkyries in an open 18 footer. Watch out for Top Weight when the conditions lighten off a bit!



Top Weight crossing the finish line. Photo thanks to Barley!

A great day was rounded off with the traditional sailors' drinks on a busy deck. The balmy night eased the pain of some and added to the celebrations of others. And it's on again next week!

If you haven't yet done so, check out the new SFS webpage: https://www.sydneyflyingsquadron.com.au/.





These photos thanks to Rolf and Marika - out on our new RIB (yes ... another new RIB)









Thanks to our volunteers – we can't do this without you!!

Final results can be found in SailSys: https://app.sailsys.com.au/club/15/results/series/6227/races

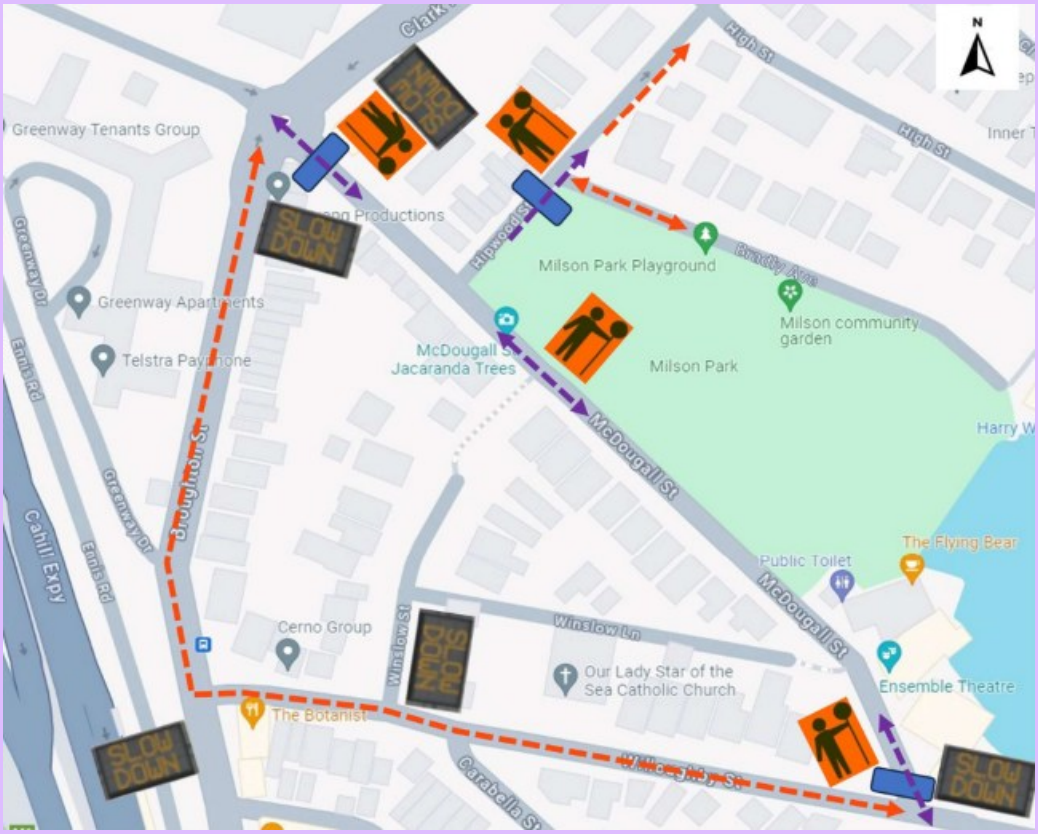
RACE 4, SPRING SERIES HEAT 4

Saturday 31 October 2026 · handicap start, scratch boat away at 2.30pm · No. 1 North-Easterly course

BOAT	HANDICAP (MINS)	SKIPPER	FINISH	SAILING TIME	CORRECTED TIME	HANDICAP PLACE	SCRATCH PLACE
Aberdare	10	Michael Carter	16:05:45	1:45:45	1:35:45	1	2
Yendys	0	Michael Van Stom	16:06:20	1:36:20	1:36:20	2	1
The Mistake	14 (set by the sailing committee)	Jerry Tickner	16:07:32	1:51:32	1:37:32	3	3
Tangalooma	14	Neville Turbit	16:10:11	1:54:11	1:40:11	4	5
Australia IV	8	Terry Stewart	16:15:26	1:53:26	1:45:26	5	4
Top Weight	15	Eloise Clarke	16:27:40	2:12:40	1:57:40	6	6
Scot	10	David Paget	Did not finish				

Road Closures in effect this weekend …

More info here: https://www.sydneyflyingsquadron.com.au/jacarandas/



Get your body to the Squaddie!

SYDNEY FLYING SQUADRON LTD

Australia's oldest open boat sailing club

76 McDougall St, Kirribilli NSW 2061