



BING LEE

66th SKATE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

30 December 2024 – 5 January 2025



SERIES RACE REPORT

By Sean Leonard
Photos Mark Paterson



66th Skate National Championship - 972 What Now and 978 Last Tango

The 66th National Skate Sailing Championship, sailed at St. George Sailing Club Sydney, and proudly supported by retailer Bing Lee, has been run and won.

Congratulations to West Australian veteran and former title holder Steve Hudson and his grandson (yes grandson) Bodhi De Freitas from East Fremantle Yacht Club WA who won the event with an unmatched display of consistency.

Steve remarked “to finish first, first you must finish”....how true, with plenty of boats breaking gear and having surgery through the regatta, with broken masts and torn centreboard cases, courtesy of Pelican Reef, unfortunately featuring.



Champions Steve Hudson & Bodhi De Freitas



BING LEE

66th SKATE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

SERIES RACE REPORT



The regatta kicked off with two heats in a gorgeous 12-15 knot Easterly on the “outside” course. It was soon clear at least 5 boats were in with a shot of bagging the title but former multiple national champion Any Which Way (Dave Luck and Dave Crawford) came out in front after 2 races after giving the fleet a lesson in how to stay out of the current.



Champion Skate - 945 End of the Road

The following day saw almost a carbon copy of conditions from the previous day with spectators on shore being treated to a barn burner of a race between Last Crack (Brett and Cam Fannon), End of the Road (Steve Hudson and Bodhi De Freitas), What Now (Greg Paterson and Yianni Foufas) and the rapidly improving Last Tango (Gavin Caporn and Matt Couch).

Motor cruisers trying to cut competitors in half, nosedives, shredded spinnakers and capsizes saw multiple lead changes with Last Tango crossing first, only to find they were OCS. What Now was also judged OCS but perhaps precipitously had perished on the final run to the finish. The ever-consistent End of The Road grabbed 1st place with Last Crack taking second.

Heat 4 was sailed in front of St George Sailing Club in a nice 10-14 knot Sou-Easter after a fresh Southerly had moved through overnight. Last Crack & Last Tango cleared away early before a snagged spinnaker halyard brought Last Crack's charge to an end and Last Tango dutifully followed by fouling another competitor and got dizzy doing penalty turns. Not to be defeated the lightweight combination of Gavin Caporn and Matt Couch on Last Tango got rolling again and steamed through the fleet for the biggest win of the regatta. Minors went to What Now and the ever-consistent WA combo on End of The Road lurking in 3rd.



Runners-Up - 972 What Now - Greg Paterson and Yianni Foufas

Heat 5 proved to be the turning point of the regatta. A beautiful 14-22 knot

Nor-East seabreeze with a big run out tide saw the race track develop its famous short interval steep waves. The day also coincided with a well-attended and lubricated function in the sailing club for sponsors, and former Skate sailors and their



BING LEE

66th SKATE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

SERIES RACE REPORT



families. The start saw Last Crack launched upwind with amazing speed, benefited no doubt by being at the heavier end of the crew weight scale. It was fantastic to watch the power sailing, and they lead at the first mark with Last Tango not far behind. Second time to windward Last Crack sailed 20 metres too far inside a channel marker while leading and unfortunately found Pelican Reef. That was the end of their race (and regatta) and the race was Last Tango's to lose. Then right on cue in front of the spectators Natural Juices (Ken Davies and Lachlan Schroder) hit a series of steep waves at speed under spinnaker and the sounds of exploding carbon filled the air. Were we not entertained? Not to be out done Every Which Way (Byron and Coel Renfrey) hit the same patch of water and over their mast went. We were entertained.



978 Last Tango - Gavin Caporn and Matt Couch

The 6th heat that same day was almost anti-climactic for spectators with 7 broken boats but it certainly wasn't anti-climactic for End of The Road, who lead the fleet home for the win and did more than enough to wrap up the regatta. Second was the ever popular Never Give n' Inch (John Grant and Glenn Crichton) and former National champion Take it Easy (Mick Winney and Emma Edwards) coming in a close 3rd.

The final heat was sailed in a sensational moderate Nor-Easter with Last Tango clearing right out only to succumb to a spinnaker rigging error that only allowed them to set the spinnaker on one side. What Now snatched the lead on the last leg and took the win, Last Tango 2nd and you guessed it..... End of the Road 3rd.

The 67th Skate nationals during 2024/25 will be back in Ceduna SA from 30 December 2025 to 8th January 2026.



945 - End of the Road