

PRESS RELEASE

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Open Dinghy Regatta 2024, Days 1 & 2

(For immediate release) As far as entries go, the Open Dinghy Regatta is now the biggest sailing event in the territory. This year, 231 boats, from three launch sites, converged on Port Shelter on Saturday, the 11th of May, to take part.

Their sail markings showed that Hong Kong's appeal as a sailing centre extends way beyond China, Macau and Singapore, and even attract entries from America. An amazing story and one that hosts – the Hebe Haven Yacht Club – can rightly be proud of.

Records indicate that the Hong Kong Yachting Association organized the first major dinghy regatta in 2002. Forty boats battled it out in Tai Tam and the event grew in popularity from there. The PYS handicapping system was used and classes included Optimists, Toppers, Lasers, 29ers, 420s and 470s. Incidentally, since the early 1990s, the major sailing clubs and institutions have put dinghy sailing high on their lists of priorities with the results speaking for themselves!

The hardstand and car park on Saturday morning was a hive of activity as sailors prepared their boats (151) and launched them from the club's slipway. The same was occurring at Shelter Cove (35) and the Sail Training Association over at Little Palm Beach (37). Each boat was given a GPS tracker by the SailFish agent from China. This allowed live coverage of the racing, and recordings for later viewing – a first for Hong Kong! By the way, this system is being developed in China and is used by windsurfers, particularly around Qingdao.

A horn was sounded ashore at 1010, and flags raised. Racing was on! "Dinghy sailors are the future. That's why we put so much effort into this event," said Bridget Chan, organizer and Rear Commodore (Sailing). "It is part of the club's ethos. The Greater Bay Area is developing fast and we are doing a lot more with sailing clubs in China. Yachting is leading the way," Chan exclaimed excitedly.

Out in Port Shelter, there were four courses with the Green Fleet, as before, closest to the University. Beyond Shelter Island, the colourful Multihulls were racing back and forth while over near Little Palm Beach the unmistakable green sails of the RS Quests caught the eye. Course 3 was laid west of Kau Sai Chau with the club utility catamaran, *Hebe One*, as committee boat and Inge Strompf as race officer.

As forecast by the Observatory, the breeze held steady at just over 8 knots from the north and everyone got in their three races for the day. But, sailors being sailors, found a number of incidents to protest. According to Rob Allen, event manager, there were 16 protests from feisty competitors the committee had to deal with and the hearings went on into the night.

To give an idea of the scale of the event, there were a total of 27 support boats and 107 volunteers giving their time over the weekend to make sure everything went according to plan. By a quarter to five, most committee boats had raised anchor and left. But it wasn't all over – Sunday was going to be the big test.

Day 2, Sunday, dawned brighter than the day before. Would the Observatory be correct in its prediction of a Force 2 or would the weather gods have a surprise for everyone?

It was hot and humid, but bearable, as the support boat came alongside the Grand Banks committee boat to offload media personnel. Sailing furiously around the simple windward /

PRESS RELEASE

leeward were Quests, Fevas, 2.4mRs and Hansas, eager to make the most of the racing for the six-race series.

But at 1300, the rain clouds over Sai Kung came swirling out over the open water. Fortunately, all the classes had finished their six races and were able to lower their sails and head for the Hebe Haven Yacht Club's Garden Bar and the much anticipated final prizegiving at 1630. With five protests to deal with, the sailors had more time to tuck into the club's delicious hamburgers – some even went back for more. Then, at 1730, Rob Allen was able to make the awards. 1st in the 29er class was Tiffany Mak & Emily Polson, 1st in the 470s was Eliza Ling & Katie Mok, 1st in the Multihull Open class was Karl Chan & Katie Sin.

The Fevas saw Pu Yan Duo & Tai Choi Fung emerge victorious while the RS Quests were won by Vivian Ngan & Peter Cheung. 1st in the Hansa 303 Class was Fung Wai On and Balmira long took the Fusion Class.

Alfred Yip came out on top in the Picos. This may be the last time the Picos race as they are no longer producing this popular dinghy.

Optimist Green Fleet winner was Yung Chong while the Optimist Main Fleet champion was Zihan Liu. Optimist Intermediate Fleet winner was Karisse Hah and the ILCA 4s were won by Samuel Tan-Hardy, the ILCA 6s by Daniel Chan and the ILCA 7s by Peter Jessop.

Despite the rain and confined conditions, the prizegiving was a great success thanks to the personality of Sailing Centre manager, Rob Allen, who kept the sailors in suspense with his countdown and playful banter. Commodore Don Johnston, vice commodore Sonny Payne, and Cheung Mei Han from the Sailing Federation of Hong Kong, China presented prizes and, as a gesture of appreciation, Allen referred to Mother's Day saying "We wouldn't be here if it wasn't for them." So true.

Facebook: [Hebe Haven Yacht Club](#) | Instagram: [hhyc_offical](#) | [HHYC Website](#)

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About Hebe Haven Yacht Club

Hebe Haven Yacht Club is a private members club established in the Pak Sha Wan, Sai Kung area in 1963. The Club provides first-class yacht racing and boating facilities for members. The Club also works closely with local schools and organisations, to offer training facilities and professional instruction to develop youth sailing in Hong Kong. In addition, as a 'Caring Organisation' member, the Club proactively contributes to the local community with regularly organised events.

For media enquiries, please contact our PR & Marketing Department.