



## 2011 New Zealand Freestyle Nationals

The 2011 New Zealand Freestyle Nationals were once again held in Auckland with fantastic conditions and a strong group of entries.

All the way up from Wellington came Tim Haxell, Eric Torvelainen and Robert Harrison, greeted by the local Auckland freestyle scene, sunny blue sky and a building SW breeze.



As the forecast for Sunday didn't look too promising the AWA didn't want to take any risk and decided to try to get a result by Saturday afternoon. With Windguru predicting around 20kts SW for the Auckland region we headed over to Bayswater to kick off the event.

Similar to last year the entry numbers allowed us to run a double elimination to get as many heats as possible and give everyone a chance to come back after losing a heat.

The heats were drawn at the skippers meeting, the comp box was set on the water and the judges headed over to the marina to get as close as possible to the action.

After the first round, it was Thomas Davies vs Alex Strehz and Tim Haxell vs. Robert Harrison. Thomas made a huge comeback after being off the water with a bad foot injury for several months, showing no signs of weakness. With super clean flakas, Clew first Spock 540's and even a Flaka 720 the heat was his and he advanced through to the next round. There he met Tim Haxell who sailed super solid against Robert in his heat, showing Grubby's, flaka's and Spock 540's.

One of the first highlights was the second heat in the loser's round, Jebbe Unthank vs. Robert Harrison. Both sailors showed a great performance incl a super nice Shaka by Robert and a spin loop by Jebbe. A very hard decision for the judges but in the end Robert Harrison advanced through to the next round.



The other thriller heat was Thomas vs. Tim in their first battle which saw Thomas going through with a slightly better overall performance. It was a very close call as both competitors showed huge skills, incl a smooth clew first Spock 540, several flakas, flaka 720's and a nicely landed spinloop by both.

Tim lost and had to go through the losers' round meeting Robert, who showed a great performance impressing the judges and spectators with his shove it's and spock's just

meters away from the marina. Tim once again pulled off some big moves in that heat and showed everyone that he's the one going through to meet Thomas in their first final.

Thomas and Tim – the heat was on, literally - as both knew that if Thomas would win he would have defeated his National title and if Tim would win they would have had to compete again in a second final due to the double elimination.

Both put everything on one card which made for a great spectacle on and off the water. Grubby's, Flaka's, loops, spocks, spock 540 clew first and one handed, these boys showed that they are worth competing for the National title.

This time Tim showed better nerves and a slightly better overall heat which meant they had to go for another final to seal the title.

But by the time Thomas came back in it was clear that he wouldn't go for another heat. He pushed his foot to the limit in the previous heats and he was clearly in pain getting out of the water. Although it was a shame that they couldn't fight for the title in a proper heat Thomas showed great sportsmanship giving the 2011 title to Tim Haxell who was clearly stoked that he didn't have to compete one more heat.



Getting back ashore everyone was happy to get into the sausages and beer kindly provided by our Sponsor **Rodgers Dental**, and fill up some energy with some chilled flavoured milk drinks kindly sponsored by **Primo**.

After drawing the spotprizes, donated by the sponsors **WSP** and **A'ND Distribution** it was time to congratulate the winner of the 2011 New Zealand Freestyle Nationals: **Tim Haxell**

Big thanks to all the helpers from the AWA, the time, the boat and of course the sponsors!

#### Overall Results:

1. Tim Haxell
2. Thomas Davies
3. Robert Harrison
4. Alex Strehz
5. Jebbe Unthank
6. Daniel Thomas
7. Eric Torvelainen
8. Jack Holliday

