

# After the Optimist



Ed Baird

Photo © Sergio Dionisio

## Some of this year's ex-Optimist world champions

Ed Baird (USA)	World Match Racing
Xavier Rohart (FRA)	Olympic Star Class
Gustavo Lima (POR)	Olympic Laser Class
Ben Ainslie (GBR)	Olympic Finn Class
Siren Sundby (NOR)	Olympic Europe Class
Gabrio Zandoná (ITA)	Olympic 470M Class
Sofia Bekatorou (GRE)	Olympic 470W Class
Chris Draper (GBR)	Olympic 49er Class
Aron Lolic (CRO)	International Laser Radial Class
Isobel Ficker (BRA)	International 420 Class
David Evans (GBR)	International 29er Class
Jeremy Koo (MAS)	International Byte Class
Tonci Stipanovic (CRO)	International Laser Radial Youth
Sime Fantela (CRO)	International 470 Youth

*Not all did that well in the Optimist. This year's Tornado Class world silver medallist placed 142nd in the Optimist Worlds. Maybe he needed another hull!*

[www.optiworld.org/ioda-oldboys.html](http://www.optiworld.org/ioda-oldboys.html)

## *A lifetime sport*

Sailing is a lifetime sport where those aged 8 to 80 are practising the same skills. One of the tasks of the Optimist Class is to provide the sailors of the future.

## *70-80% continue to sail*

Research on the internet has established that *at least* two thirds of Optimist sailors who reach national championship level continue to sail competitively after the Optimist

A study of the sailors at the 1995 Optimist Worlds has found that 66% of them can be *identified* as sailing later, and in the European Union this figure rises to 80%, perhaps because of better internet reporting.

And surveys of under-13 sailors at purely national events show similar percentages.

## *Feeding the youth Classes*

Former Optimist sailors dominate the youth Classes, this year winning the world championships and/or world youth championships of the Laser Radial, Laser Standard, Byte, 470 and 29er among others.

## *50% of the Olympic fleet*

At the Sydney Olympics over 50% of all dinghy helms were former Optimist sailors: of these over 70% had sailed in IODA World or continental championships.

Results from the 2003 ISAF World Championship suggest that this figure will be higher in Athens.

*The success of the Optimist is the future of sailing!*