

## Youth Racing Team Wins Gold and has Major Success at Victoria Regatta!

*The SISC Racing Team competed in the 2023 Royal Victoria Yacht Club Fall Dinghies Regatta on September 23 and 24.*



This is an annual event that brings clubs from all over BC – including Comox Bay, Royal Vancouver, West Vancouver, and Royal Victoria and others - to race against each other. This year's race had over 150 boats.

Participating in a regatta takes a lot of work by the SISC Junior Program volunteers. This year, SISC sent two 420 boats to the regatta and five Optis – this was a big turnout from a small club and was more than other clubs of similar size.

*(above, the 420 fleet)*

In the Club 420 category, SISC racers Izzi Pugh Aucoin and Reuben Sol came in first, and Vincent Von Rueckmann and Malikaa Clement came in 4<sup>th</sup>. Congratulations, racers!! *(below, 420s rounding the mark)*





*(above, the 420 podium)*

The racers worked very hard to achieve these results and have been training in the SISC race program since 2020, most starting in Optis. This year, they got on the water as much as they could – practicing rain or shine since the spring, volunteering for the sailing school in the summer, and coming out for Wednesday night racing on keelboats when they could.

Coach John Hillier says *“the success our racing team has had this year, in my opinion, boils down to a few factors. 1) Time on the water, split between volunteering at the sailing school, race team practices, keelboat racing, and IOM sailing. 2) Our club and volunteer commitment to having fast new boats/sails and a supportive fun environment for the kids to excel and learn. 3) And, most importantly, smart and dedicated kids who have gone through our sailing program over the past few years. We have set a high standard for our club’s Junior Program, that has been noticed by other clubs, and I look forward to seeing it grow from here”*.

In the Opti Green category, all SISC boats finished in the top half (this race supports participation and doesn’t post results). Five SISC Opti boats raced with racers James Harvey, Xander Harvey, Johnny Malcolm, Aoi Otsu and Luci Pugh Aucoin showing good results and developing their racing skills. Congratulations to the Opti racers!!

*(right, an Opti racer)*



This is the first time in many years (maybe the first time ever) that SISC has sent Optis to this regatta, and was an excellent opportunity for Junior racers to get racing experience. SISC's newly purchased Optis helped to make this participation possible.



The excellent results of the racers highlight the hard work and continued commitment not only of the racers, but of their coaches and Club volunteers who have contributed many hours to the program, from passionate and committed coaching to maintaining coach boats, repairing dinghies, power-washing, fixing docks, and building trailers to carry our fleet. This ongoing commitment has allowed the racing program to grow and flourish.

Thanks to 420 Coach John Hillier, Opti Coaches Anya Neish and Finley Valentine-Ward, past coaches Lukas Koch and Rhys Parry, and to April Faget, the Race Team Coordinator, who has been the driving force behind the SISC racing program for the past six years and has enabled the development of these teams.

*(left, the Opti team on the water)*

April believes that *“the success of our teams at the regatta comes down to the commitment of our coaches. John Hillier has dedicated his time to weekly 420 practices since the spring. His encouragement has allowed the kids to really push their abilities and the progression of their skills has been phenomenal.*

*Coaches Anya, Finley and Lukas have also made great strides with the Opti fleet since the spring. In their first regatta, our Opti sailors all finished in the top of the Green Fleet. Anya and Finley are positive, supportive coaches who brought everyone's sailing level up.”*

Congratulations to the SISC racing program, and keep up the great sailing!

*(right, the 420 and Opti race teams)*

