

# Laser World



September 2016



## Olympic Respect at Rio 2016!

INTERVIEW WITH TOM BURTON  
GOLD MEDALLIST RIO 2016

FLORENCE ALLAN AGED 18 YEARS OLD  
REPRESENTS CAYMAN ISLANDS

INTERVIEW WITH MARIT BOUWMEESTER  
GOLD MEDALLIST RIO 2016



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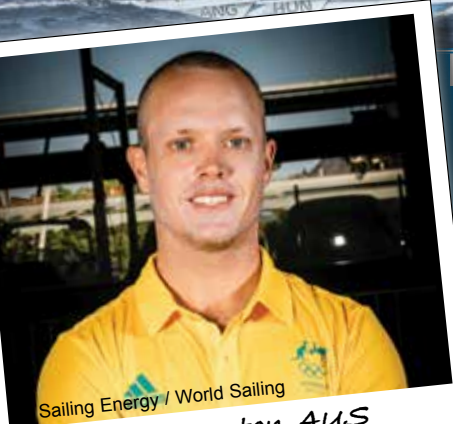
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# Tom Burton (AUS)

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*Olympic gold medallist Tom Burton talks about his success at Rio and his plans for the future!*

*Interview by Heather Jones*



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*Tom Burton AUS  
Laser Standard Men  
Gold Medallist at Rio: 2016*

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*Tom with Sam Meech (NZL)  
and Tonci Stipanovic (CRO)*

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*Success for Australia and  
a delighted Tom Burton!*

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*The Laser Standard Men's  
Fleet in Rio*

## **How tough was it out there on the water?**

*It was very tough. Different conditions every day together with different race courses - meaning different wave patterns / tides / skills required - made it very different day to day.*

## **What gave you the winning edge?**

*I was very happy with my preparation. Both in the months before and the week leading up in Rio. I was very comfortable with the venue and knowing it was going to be a tough week and to keep fighting all the way to the end made the bad days not so bad and the good days even more special.*

## **Are there any areas that you still feel you need to improve in a Laser?**

*I think I would like to have better downwinds at times. I know I can be fast downwind but I am more comfortable with my upwinds, so find myself a little cautious on the downwinds.*

## **Why choose the Laser to compete in?**

*The Laser is such a great class, with the insane high quality fleet and the numbers of boats at every event. It's always tough from club racing up to the Olympics and I love the intensity. It's very rewarding knowing every boat is the same and I need to sail well to win. If I win I know I was the best on the day.*

## **How was Rio as a venue?**

*Rio definitely turned it on. I was waiting for the Olympic venue to get very flashy but that never really happened. It was still a nice vibe and the race course didn't have any issues. I had some frustrations with the timing of everything and some things running a little late but it all came together in the end.*

## **Were you concerned about the water?**

*I wasn't really concerned. I've seen much worse after torrential rain in some training blocks. We had vitamins and things on hand and had all the vaccines before arriving.*

## **Was there a good sense of camaraderie?**

*Yeah we are all friends. We race hard on the water but all know everyone is just trying their hardest and we can chat about it on land. Obviously the Olympics is the pinnacle so it was a bit more serious at this regatta.*

## **Did you get a big welcome back to Australia?**

*We had a huge reception like every Olympic team does on the return to Australia. It has been great. Sailing has had some media coverage and it's good to see the sailing tactics come into the media with my sailing medal race getting coverage nation wide.*

## **Do you think your Olympic success could lead to other paths?**

*I'd hope so. I really put a lot of effort into the last 4-8 years so I would love for it to continue to bigger and better things. Saying that I'm very happy with where I'm at and will continue to make small steps towards a larger goal.*

## **Will your success help with future sponsorship?**

*I'm not sure. I'm lucky in already being supported by a fantastic team with a bunch of team supporters. I'm also very fortunate to already have great personal sponsors, and am very happy to reward their support with a win at the Olympics which was the goal when I first started talking with them.*

## **Have you had much time to relax since your return?**

*It's getting better. The first week was very intense. It's still a solid days work with emails and functions but it's slowing down. I've had some days off, chilling on the couch, sailing other boats and catching up with friends.*

## **Will you compete in the 2020 Olympics?**

*I think the more time I've had to think about it and look at the options I will be aiming to go to Tokyo and more than likely in the Laser. No one has won back to back gold medals in the Laser so it definitely looks appealing.*

## **What are your plans for the long term?**

*I'm not really sure. I would love to keep sailing and get more involved in the yachting side as well as the Olympic side and become more of an all round sailor.*

## **Where do you keep your gold medal?**

*At the moment I'm still visiting friends, family, schools and functions so it's been doing alot of travelling in my backpack!*

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# Marit Bouwmeester (NED)

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*Marit Bouwmeester upgrades her silver medal from London 2012 to a gold medal at the Rio 2016 Olympics!*

*Interview by Heather Jones*

## **Congratulations on your success at Rio. How are you feeling post Olympics?**

*It's a great feeling to achieve what I always wanted. It has been an incredible journey with my coach Jaap Zielhuis and my brother/training partner Roelof Bouwmeester on my side. It's an honour to win a gold sailing medal for the Netherlands since the last one was 80 years ago and also to be the first female sailor to win the gold. It doesn't change that much, in the perspective that I still go on the water and enjoy sailing and go to the gym to enjoy my physical training. I love what I do and that's why I will continue towards Tokyo.*

## **How tough was it out there on the water?**

*With all the different race courses, the continuous changing tide in the bay and the surrounding flat water versus the waves outside the bay, made it very challenging to sail. Every day was a different day and that kept the place very exciting. Being the Olympics, the racing was very intense. But it's great to be able to compete at the top of the fleet.*

## **What gave you the winning edge?**

*I spent a lot of time in Rio which made me as confident as I could be in that venue. I'm an all round sailor, so I was happy with whatever the day would bring.*

## **Are there any areas that you still feel you need to improve in a Laser?**

*As in life, you always keep learning.*

## **Why choose the Laser to compete in?**

*It's great to sail a one-design, it really comes down to who sails the boat the quickest and smartest. I also love to sail by myself.*

## **How was Rio as a venue?**

*I think the Brazilians did a good job in organising the event. I enjoyed being there.*

## **Were you concerned about the water quality?**

*No, I spent a year in Rio in total; I was not concerned by the water quality nor did I ever get sick by the water.*

## **Was there a good sense of camaraderie?**

*Being the Olympics I reckon the sailors are a little tenser, but that makes the racing even more interesting.*

## **Did you get a big welcome back upon your return to The Netherlands?**

*It was great coming back to my home country. The medal race had a viewing rate of 1.3 million people which is extraordinary for sailing in the Netherlands. I hope I was able to inspire lots of kids to join this great sport.*

## **Do you think your Olympic success could lead to other paths?**

*Time will tell.*

## **Will your success help with future sponsorship?**

*I hope so. It's very recent, so I will see what time will bring.*

## **Have you had much time to relax since your return?**

*It's only 3 weeks ago, so things have been a bit hectic. But I did manage to get some time with friends and family, which is great.*

## **Will you compete in the 2020 Olympics?**

*Yes I will continue for Japan, most likely in the Laser.*

## **What are your plans for the long term future and your career?**

*For the short term future my brother and I are trying to get kids excited for sailing sports, that's why we share all our knowledge on [www.sportvid.com/Marit](http://www.sportvid.com/Marit). A complete video instruction box from buying the Laser, to finishing a race will be available from next week onwards. As a nutritionist and personal trainer, I see myself training other people in the long term future.*

## **Where do you keep your medal?**

*I'm not sure where I will keep it yet, but for sure I will find a nice place for it.*

**Sign up for free advice and top tips from Marit at: [www.sportvid.com/Marit](http://www.sportvid.com/Marit)**



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*Marit Bouwmeester NED  
Laser Radial Women  
Gold Medallist: Rio 2016*



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*On the Podium at Rio 2016*



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*Marit proud to represent  
The Netherlands*



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*The Laser Radial  
Women's Fleet in Rio*

[www.laserinternational.org](http://www.laserinternational.org)

# Sail Numbers & National Letters

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Jeff Martin

*Sail inspection*



© Marina Könitzer

*Prepare your sail before the event to avoid pressure and mistakes!*



© JLDigitalMedia

*Measurement Day!*

All this is important to comply with the class rules and making a neat and clean look on the sail. Checking the sail numbers and national letters is mandatory at many international and national events and when the Notice of Race or the Sailing Instructions specify this.

The check will only take a few minutes. Correcting mistakes takes a lot longer.

Thanks to our Chief Measurer Jean-Luc Michon for his technical input.

[www.laserinternational.org](http://www.laserinternational.org)

## *Questions, Answers and Tips for applying Laser Standard, Laser Radial and Laser 4.7 sail numbers and national letters.*

Before applying the numbers and national letters on your sail please read these notes:

### How to apply letters and numbers?

The Racing Rules of Sailing and the Class Rules specify the size and placing of sail numbers and letters. All boats must comply with these rules for racing. ILCA has an easy **GUIDE** for the application of numbers and letters. **If you follow the GUIDE on our website your numbers and letters will comply with the class rules:** <http://www.laserinternational.org/info/sailnumbersandletters>

### Are there differences between the dimensions of numbers and national letters?

Sail numbers and national letters should have the same dimensions. The numbers and letters on Standard and Radial Sails are larger than those on the 4.7 sail.

### Can I use any number on my sail?

NO. You must use the full six digit hull ID number of your Laser, shown on the plaque at the aft end of the cockpit. The numbers must all be the same style and size and be clearly visible by a Race Official from a distance. The last 4 numbers must be a dark colour or black and any preceding numbers in a different contrasting colour. Numbers and Letters must be only adhesive and not created by ink pens or markers.

### Can I use the digital 8 for national letters?

While some letters can easily be made from a digital 8 (C, L, H, etc), others can not (e.g. B, D). Some of the letters can be made with a little extra work and using two digital 8s (such as R or A). For the letter R you need to cut the bottom of the 8 and make a diagonal forward 'stepping' leg and an A must have a pyramid shape. Look at the class recommendations for country letters on the above Laser website.

### Is there a space to respect between national letters and numbers?

Yes, for the Radial and Standard the **minimum** is 50mm so use 60mm to be sure the numbers and letters are not too close. For the 4.7, the **minimum** is 30 mm so use 40mm. Numbers and letters should be regularly spaced.

### Is the red diamond mandatory for women?

Yes, it is in the class rules.

### How long does it take to put the numbers and letters on a sail?

Allow at least one hour especially if it is the first time. A lot of this time is for measuring. Check and check again and mark guide lines for placing the numbers and letters. Do not wait until you arrive at the regatta as there may not be a good space to lay the sail out and you may be under pressure to complete the application. Both of these can lead to mistakes and more pressure. If there is an inspection of sails at the event you may miss your place in the inspection timetable and then have to wait for a later time.

### What do I need to properly apply my letters and numbers?

A well-sharpened pencil, a measuring tape, a good straight edge at least a metre long plus an eraser to remove pencil lines and marks if you wish. If you use light lines for marking you can leave them on the sail as they will not be seen from 10 metres away. Make an accurate pattern 300 x 200mm (220 x 150mm for 4.7) cut from a piece of card to assist in getting numbers like 1, 3, 5, etc vertical with correct spacing. A strip of card 300 x 60mm (220 x 40mm for 4.7) is also helpful for correct spacing between numbers and letters.

### How do I begin to apply the numbers and letters?

Follow the instructions on the ILCA website. Always start with numbers on the starboard side of the sail. Make sure you draw the long horizontal **Base Line** to keep all numbers or letters on the same level, with the bottom of each number or letter on the line. Draw a **Leech Guide Line** 300mm line up from the **Base Line** and 100mm parallel to the leech. The first starboard side number must just touch the 100mm line. There is a +/- 12 mm tolerance on this measurement.

When you have finished the starboard side numbers turn the sail over and draw a new horizontal **Base Line** for the port side numbers. Draw a new **Leech Guide Line** 100mm from the leech for the port side numbers. **The port side numbers and letters are applied starting with the number/letter closest to the leech. This will not be directly below the starboard tack numbers/letters as the leech does not run 90 degrees to the Base Lines. The number/letter must just touch the Leech Guide Line**

Start the application of letters on the starboard side of the sail. The positioning rules for the numbers and letters are the same.

# Vanessa Dudley (AUS)

*Vanessa Dudley, second time overall winner of the Radial Grand Masters, talks about why she still loves Laser sailing at the age of 57.*

*Interview by Heather Jones*

## **What boat did you first sail?**

A Manly Junior, which is a snub-nosed timber dinghy designed locally and sailed by two kids with a main, jib and spinnaker.

## **What other boats have you sailed?**

Almost everything! All sort of dinghies, including Moths, which back then were non-foiling plywood scows, and 18-Foot skiffs which were very fast, very thrilling and very scary. I know a lot of dinghy sailors find keelboat sailing quite boring, but I love being able to do both. I've done a lot of offshore racing in boats from 9-30m (30-100ft), including the Sydney to Hobart yacht race, which is every sailing kid's daydream when you grow up in Sydney watching the fleets depart every Boxing Day.

## **Why have you chosen to sail a Laser?**

I love the great one-design racing, relatively low costs and minimal boat maintenance requirements, great friendships with fellow club and class members and the ability to get out on the water without having to rely on anyone else. Also the physical demands of Laser sailing give me a reason to get up off the couch and out for a walk or to the gym.

## **Favourite sailing venue and why?**

Sydney Harbour, especially the open Sound area between North, South and Middle Heads. I'm a member of Middle Harbour Amateur Sailing Club, which is a small shed full of Lasers. We take turns to run the racing and share a great club spirit. It's also a fantastic place to train for regattas because you can choose whether to practise in the flat water of Middle Harbour or the rough water and swells out in the Sound.

## **How many hours do you typically sail?**

I work full time so my sailing is for fun on Saturdays and Sundays. When there's a regatta coming up I'll try to get out a couple of afternoons after work as well during the month before the event.

## **How often do you compete at regattas?**

As often as possible. We have a very active and well-managed NSW & ACT District Laser association which runs three or four good regattas each year. Every second year we have an Australian Laser Masters regatta. And it's always great to have a world title to work towards.

## **How did you prepare for the Masters?**

We had a big contingent of MHASC members at the Laser Radial Masters

Worlds in Mexico, which meant there was a good training squad on weekends, and I also liked to get out on my own after work to practice boat handling drills. The timing of these worlds in April/May was just about perfect for us, because the sailing conditions were still good and we could build on the end of our summer racing season. My club mate Jeff Loosemore is a very dedicated Laser sailor and he was very generous to me with his time as a training partner. We ended up racing each other for the grand masters title in Mexico.

## **Tell us about the Masters in Mexico?**

The conditions in Mexico really suited me, because I seemed to be very fast upwind upwind when I could just stretch out to full hiking, and most of the races were in that wind range. The waves were fun downwind too, although I got a yellow flag for body pumping on the reach in the first race and really had to curb my enthusiasm for the rest of the regatta.

It was very exciting to win in Mexico because there was a big fleet and it was close right up to the final race. Winning the Grand Masters in Oman in 2013 was really thrilling - we had a fairly small fleet there so to be able to win again in a much bigger fleet made me feel really great.

## **What other World Championships have you attended?**

Mexico was my seventh Laser Masters Worlds. My first was in Terrigal, Australia in 2008. When I was much younger I also raced Lasers in the Women's World Championships, back in the days when everyone sailed standard rig.

I've competed in 20 Sydney to Hobart yacht races, perhaps I can stop now!

## **How long will you continue to sail?**

We're so lucky that sailing is a pastime we can enjoy at any age. I'm full of admiration for the Legends sailors at the Laser Masters Worlds, and hope I'll be able to join them one day.

## **Why do you think there aren't more women competing at the Masters?**

This is baffling to me. Family commitments must have something to do with it, and a lot of women are not quite big enough to compete equally in all conditions. Hopefully things will change in the future when all the current era of great young women Radial sailors reach Masters age. The 4.7 rig might also widen the options for women, although so far this hasn't gained any traction at the Masters Worlds.



© Vanessa Dudley

*Vanessa Dudley (AUS)*



© Vanessa Dudley

*Dudley sailing at her club in Sydney*



© Vanessa Dudley

*Sailing an 18ft skiff*



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*2016 Laser Radial Masters World Championship, Mexico*

## **Most influential person in your life?**

My parents Ailsa and Bill were never sailors themselves, but they did everything possible to support me and my brothers and help us follow our interests.

# Florence Allan (CAY)

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*Florence Allan, aged 18 years old, talks about how it felt to represent the Cayman Islands at the Rio 2016 Olympics!*

*Interview by Heather Jones*

## **How did you get into sailing?**

I started sailing when I was 7 through the summer camps at my local club. I didn't get into competitive sailing until 2011. I have been Laser sailing for 2 years now.

## **How often do you sail?**

I have been sailing 3-4 days a week and on the other days I was in the gym. There are 5 Laser sailors (including me) on the youth sailing team that are my training partners and competition.

## **How is sailing in The Caymans?**

The North Sound that I sail in is quite shallow, so the wave height is never very substantial (which made sailing in the open ocean course in Rio quite challenging!). Winds in Cayman can range anywhere from 1 knot to 25 knots depending on the time of year, so we have a variety of wind conditions. There is very little tidal range or current in the North Sound that I sail in - so it was a lot to adjust to in Rio.

## **Tell us about the day you found out you were going to the Olympics? ?**

The club manager of the Cayman Islands Sailing Club phoned my Dad with the news and my Dad told me in person straight after. It was the same day I had my first A-Level exam so I was studying when I found out! I burst into tears straight away because I was so overwhelmed! It was just getting everything you've ever wanted in your entire life all at once, so it was a very special experience. But it was also difficult to train as much as I would have liked to, being in the thick of my exams.

## **Were you more nervous or excited about attending The Olympic Games?**

Initially I was very excited to compete, but as we got closer and closer to leaving the Island and starting the regatta, I got very nervous! I was the most nervous about people watching all my races on TV, because I had never been filmed like that before. Luckily the nerves subsided just before the regatta started and I was excited and enjoying the whole event.

## **Do you have sponsorship?**

The Cayman Islands Olympic Committee helped me tremendously with sponsorship, support and help for training trips and for the games to Rio and flights etc. I was also sponsored by some local companies, such as Richard Flowers of Flowers Bottled Water, Mike Farrington of Compass Marine, David Carmichael and Frank Atkinson. My parents have also been a huge support.

One person that must not be forgotten is my brilliant coach, Raphael Harvey. He has been with me every step of the way. I am very grateful and thankful to him for his support. The Cayman Islands Sailing Club have also been very supportive.

## **What was the atmosphere like in Rio?**

It was an incredible atmosphere, and I don't really know how to put it into words. There was such a positive vibe and atmosphere. Everyone was so happy and excited to be there and compete. It was definitely different from any regatta I've been to before.

## **What were the sailing conditions like?**

I wasn't expecting as much wind and being the lightest sailor at the Games I struggled quite a bit in some wind conditions. Also, I'm not used to sailing in tide/current and the waves in the open ocean course proved to be quite difficult to adjust to. It was obviously the most difficult regatta I've ever competed in due to the level of competition as everyone was much more aggressive.

## **How did it feel to represent your country?**

It has taken a lot of work, on and off the water, and a lot of sacrifice. But all the nights that I didn't go out and all the beach days that I missed meant so little as soon as I walked out in that Stadium at the Opening Ceremony! All the work that I put in was worthwhile when I saw the Cayman Islands flag on my sail!

## **Are you now a celebrity in the Caymans?**

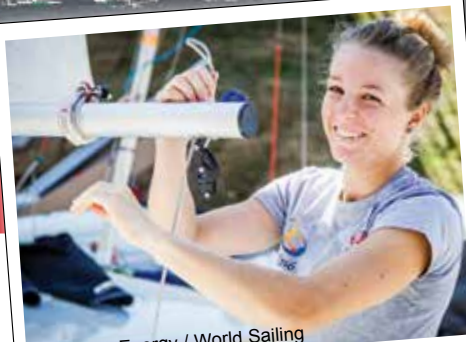
I wouldn't consider myself a celebrity back home, but I hope that I can inspire people to dream and achieve big things. I hope that our whole Olympic Team was able to show other people in Cayman that it doesn't matter that we're a small country and not recognised on the international stage - we can still achieve big things!

## **How have family and friends reacted?**

My friends and family have been incredibly supportive of me and my sailing. I honestly couldn't have asked for a better support system.

## **What's next for you?**

I have just started studying at the University of Exeter, doing Politics, Philosophy and Economics. Hopefully soon I will start sailing a double handed boat with Pablo Bertran who is on my sailing team in the Cayman Islands and whom I sailed with at the Youth Olympic Games in China, 2014. I would also like to start sailing with my University team and do team racing with them.



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*Florence Allan  
Age: 18 years old*



© Gillian Allan

*Florence with her coach in Rio*



© Sailing Energy / World Sailing

*Rio 2016 Olympics*



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*Proud to represent Cayman!*

## **Who is your sailing hero?**

There's a lot of people I respect in our sport; however, I definitely look up to Cy Thompson from the U.S. Virgin Islands. He's proved to me that people from the Caribbean can still become very good sailors who are well recognised internationally!