

# Laser Masters World Championships 7<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> September 2018



## Rory Fitzpatrick, Irish Olympian and Medal Winning Olympic Coach gives us an insiders guide to Dublin Bay.

Looking out to sea on any given Thursday evening in summer you will see that Dublin Bay is littered with hundreds of boats enjoying local racing. There are two reasons for this. The first is that Dublin Bay is a World Class sailing venue (and don't let anyone from Cork tell you otherwise unless they sail out of Roaring Waters Bay). The second reason is that Dun Laoghaire has great sailing clubs serving the best Guinness you could possibly imagine.

In Dublin Bay you can experience everything that inshore sailing can offer. Say hello to the lazy seals as you proceed out of the harbour and if you're lucky you'll be greeted by our numerous porpoise families that frequent the Bay.

When you get racing you'll see everything from flat to choppy water with the oscillations of the Westerlies directions to steadier onshore wave sailing of the Easterlies and Sea breezes with tides and currents coming into play on some course area's whilst at times having little effect on others.

So, let's have a run through the main wind directions to let you know what you are in for starting with the prevailing Wind

**South West - North West:** This is a great racing Wind, especially in the mid to high windspeeds. You can play shifts upwind over and back towards the city and when you get a big one tack over onto the lift and try to put the bow down, hiking hard to get over to the next header. Every once in a while a dark cumulus might come along and if you spot it first you could get yourself a winner.

Expect a nice chop that turns to flat water on the Seapoint course while if you are placed further out in the bay you'll have awesome downwind sailing in the short spaced tall waves. Turning back against them you'll have your work cut out.

If you go by Windguru when it says this wind direction (above 10 knots) it generally will be exactly what it says on the tin. The same goes for directions from West all the way round to the North.

The caveat for this direction is on sunny day a light W/NW can be pushed back into the city by a thermal effect leaving a no wind zone straight out in front of the harbour mouth. The local race officers will be familiar with this and pick the winning wind for racing.

**South West - South:** The man who knows that he knows nothing in fact knows the most. Socratic ignorance will get you far in this case. Have your head out of the boat and be prepared to commit to a strategy that makes you feel nervous. If it doesn't you should worry about that too! There are two certainties with this direction. The first is the forecasted windspeed will be wrong and the second is that it will rain in the next 24-48 hours as this is our normal prefrontal direction before the Westerlies roll back in.

The Wicklow mountains lay to the South of the Bay whilst the Dublin hills are off to the South West. Depending on the intricacies of the direction you will experience a combination of the wind flanking the mountains from either side as well as coming over the top. Predictability will be low in this range so the dark water is your best friend. The shifts come with the pressure so if you sail a header behind the fleet you might as well keep going until you get to the bar and enjoy a pint of Guinness instead.

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Windguru only spawns rumours for this direction. Beware the South wind has two characters and to find out whether you're getting Dr Jekyll or Mr Hyde the clue is in the skies. Match the wind shown with cloud cover. An overcast South wind will be as described above with a wrapping swell coming into the bay from the Irish Sea. Expect the forecasts to over play the windspeed as the warm air from the South doesn't drop down from the mountains easily so much of the difference can be seen with the fast-moving clouds overhead while it passes Dun Laoghaire

**South to Easterly:** A sunny Southerly will give you a pumping South Easterly sea breeze (the 'rumourcasts' don't pick it up). South gives the correct gradient for the thermal to work up top. An extended beat of sunshine on the city will be enough to pull the wind left and help add the thermal wind to a southerly that will spill in around Dalkey island.

If Windguru says it will be a 3 to 4 knot Southerly with clear skies you are actually in for a cracking day of wind and wave racing. Boat speed counts so don't leave the dock without your hiking pads.

**East to North:** Harbour engineer John Renee was persuaded to leave the entrance a little wider than he would have liked by the Admiralty as it was being built in the 1800's. This direction is the scourge of the harbour because the great sailing waves it brings make it into the harbour entrance, adding to the wear on the pier but for the wave loving laser sailors it means there is fun to be had. The North Easters come with the high-pressure systems so can lock in for days building up quite a sea. With onshore wind and a lot of sea state your orientation during racing can be tricky. A compass can be one of your best friends for this wind.

As you can get all of the above in the space of a few days Dublin Bay brings a broad test of a sailor's skills and (at times) character as only one design racing can do. Expect some of your favourite conditions and some of the ones you are working on. Come back ashore and enjoy the barbecue and a few pints on the club balcony. By that stage there will be plenty of good stories to tell and you will have gladly earned it.

To get an idea of live weather check out the Dublin Bay Buoy on twitter <https://mobile.twitter.com/dublinbaybuoy> or <http://www.dlhweather.com>



**Rory Fitzpatrick** is the Olympic Head Coach for the ISA Performance department. Rory, from Dun Laoghaire in Dublin, is working full time along side James O'Callaghan under the guidance of the ISA's OSG (Olympic Steering Group). Rory manages the delivery of the ISA Academy programme, oversees the delivery of the ISA Pathway National Championships and coaches the Laser Radial for the Olympic Team.