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# Sailing World Cup Melbourne pays tribute to Paul Elvstrom

by Daniel Smith - World Sailing on 8 Dec



Denmark on the scoreboard at the 1956 Olympic Games - 2016 Sailing World Cup Final - Melbourne © Pedro Martinez / Sailing Energy / World Sailing

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## Sixty years ago, the Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron welcomed the legendary Paul Elvstrom for the Melbourne 1956 Olympic Games.

At the time the Danish sailor was carving a legacy that included four consecutive Olympic gold medals, numerous world championships and sporting innovations that are now the norm within the sport.

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Melbourne and his country name sits on the Olympic scoreboard that takes pride of place in the club room of the RMYS, part of the World Cup St Kilda Sailing Precinct.



Paul Elvstrom - London 1948 Olympic Games. He won his third Gold medal in the Finn class at Melbourne in 1956. He won Gold Medals in the Finn in 1952, 1956 and 1960, and the Firefly (singlehander) in 1948 Olympics. © ISAF

The Danish sailor sadly passed away on 7 December at the age of 88 in Hellerup, Denmark, surrounded by his family.

Sailors competing at the 2016 Sailing World Cup Final presented by Land Rover arose to the sad news, thankful for the life of a man who was so influential in setting the tone for the sport of sailing. It was fitting that Elvstrom's fellow Olympians could talk about and remember the stories that defined his career at the same venue he won his third Olympic gold.

Compatriot Anne-Marie Rindom, a Rio 2016 Olympic bronze medallist, said, 'This morning I read his third medal was here in Melbourne and it got me thinking what it was like 60 years ago? It's a bit strange to be in the same place. It's so inspiring and it makes me feel like I want to do as well as him.'



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Anne Marie Rindom - 2016 Sailing World Cup Final - Melbourne © Pedro Martinez / Sailing Energy / World Sailing

Tonci Stipanovic, Rio 2016 Olympic silver medallist echoed Rindom's thoughts, 'I never knew he won his third medal right here, so being told that makes me like this place even more, and I hope I can be just like him and win a medal here at the World Cup Final. He was at the top for a long time and to win four Olympic medals with less technology at that time, it would have been even harder to achieve what he achieved.'

As a Danish sailor it was inevitable that Rindom would grow up influenced by Elvstrom. Even though she never met Elvstrom, his impact was felt across the nation he inspired.

'He's a member of the Hall of Fame in Denmark and he did so many things for sailing in the country,' explained Rindom. 'Both from a competitive side of the sport and people saw him as a guy who could enjoy sailing for fun, as a summer holiday and activity.'

'He was a great hero for Denmark and for the world of sailing. He inspired a lot of people. He won four gold medals and went to the Olympics eight times, that's impressive, but he was a great man and invented a lot of things for sailing that improved the sport.'

One of Elvstrom's inventions was the hiking strap, a piece of equipment that sailors use as an extension of their own body to improve performance. As a Laser Radial sailor, Rindom uses the piece of equipment extensively and when she realised it was Elvstrom's creation, her admiration for the man grew even more.

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remember my coach said to me, 'you know Paul Elvstrom, he invented the hiking strap.' I was just starting in the Optimist and the hiking strap was there and I didn't think about where it came from. I thought 'that's amazing. What did they do before the hiking strap?'

'I remember at that time I came to think of him as a great man for the sport and a hero in my world.'



Oliver Bridge - 2016 Sailing World Cup Final - Melbourne © Pedro Martinez / Sailing Energy / World Sailing

Unfortunately the sailors at the Sailing World Cup Final in Melbourne weren't able to sail in honour of Elvstrom on day three of competition. Huge winds strengthened to 40 knots across Port Phillip and only the kiteboarders were able to race. Oliver Bridge (GBR) continued his excellent form in the Final Series of racing, winning three races in some big breeze. His brother Guy and Germany's Florian Gruber followed behind in all three of the days races.

The Race Committee will use Friday 9 December as an opportunity to catch up on lost races and each fleet, minus the RS:X fleets, will sail an additional race starting from 12:00 onwards.

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