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Australian Sailors Get a Head Start on Olympic Waters

As the Australian summer concludes and the sailors are set for the 2025 international regattas, the Australian Sailing ILCA7 squad has made a crucial stopover in Long Beach, California, the future home of the LA 2028 Olympic sailing competition. This training camp wasn't just about logging extra hours on the water, it was about building a foundation for success in 2028.

Australian ILCA7 squad members Ethan McAullay and Zac Littlewood, alongside their coach Rafa Trujillo, spent two weeks training and competing in the ILCA Midwinters West regatta at Alamitos Bay Yacht Club. Their goal was to familiarise themselves with the venue's unique conditions, from the way the seabreeze develops to the subtle shifts in wave patterns, providing valuable local knowledge ahead of LA 2028.

Ethan McAullay reflected on the experience, saying, "It was a great opportunity to be able to visit Long Beach. Creating familiarity both on water but also off water in Long Beach itself. We were lucky enough to do the Midwinters regatta, which had sea breezes every day, which we will be expecting to see in the summertime."

He added, "After a nice trip in 'winter time' I'm even more keen to come back this summer for the Sailing Grand Slam event in July and see how it compares."

Australian Sailing Team Technical Director Michael Blackburn joined the group to assess key areas that could give the team a competitive edge. He emphasised the importance of early venue exposure, saying, "Getting on the ground and water early at an Olympic venue is crucial for understanding the unique wind and water conditions needed to win. It also helps sailors adjust to living in a new place and makes their daily training more efficient and effective."

Blackburn also highlighted the logistical challenges of preparing in California, noting, "A key takeaway from this LA trip is that it's an expensive venue, the Aussie dollar struggled, and most things were at least 30% more expensive than at home. That means we need to make the most of every day we spend there."

Looking ahead, the focus is on getting more podium-potential athletes on the Olympic waters as soon as possible. Blackburn outlined the next steps, "Our next group of sailors will visit in July for the Olympic Classes Regatta, which will include both ILCA squads and Breiana Whitehead in the Formula Kite. This will roughly align with the Olympic dates in 2028, giving them valuable race experience."

For the Australian Sailing Team, this stopover in LA was more than just a training exercise, it was a glimpse into the challenges and opportunities that await in 2028. As focus now shifts to the Trofeo Princesa Sofía regatta to kick off the 2025 Sailing Grand Slam, the team is building momentum, ensuring they're ready to rise to the challenge in 2028

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About Australian Sailing

Australian Sailing is the governing body for the sport of Sailing in Australia. We are responsible for the administration, promotion and development of sailing. We are a member-based organisation that represent the interests and provides services and support to over 360 clubs across Australia as well as more than 160 accredited Discover Sailing Centres.

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