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# Sail GP: how many women on the water this weekend?

Theme:  
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Co-authored by KAI SCHWOERER / THE PRESS

Every boat on the water at [this weekend’s SailGP event](#) features a female professional sailor, hoping to inspire the next generation.

[SailGP](#) requires all teams to race with [a female athlete on board](#). Teams are also required to hold selection camps to identify and include female athletes in training.

On Thursday evening, the female professional sailors from its 10 international teams spoke at a [Breaking Boundaries](#) free event at the Lyttelton Arts Factory, offering insights into their careers and discussing the evolving pursuit of gender equity in sailing.

“Until now... outside of Olympic sailing it was quite hard to get into professional sailing and now you can see it after SailGP, [that] there’s female inclusion,” Spain’s Nicole van der Velden told *The Press* ahead of the event.

“There’s now going to be a [women’s America’s Cup](#) for the first time ever, it’s made a movement and... that’s really exciting to see.”

“In my case, I feel really lucky to get to the point I’ve gotten to, I never would have expected to be in the position I am now when I was younger in all those moments of doubt,” she said.

“Really believe that you can make it and really work hard for what you want.”

It was not just about making movements in on the sailing team, van der Velden said. The group hoped to inspire more women in other departments, like engineers and data gathering.

The female quota was pioneered in 2021 as part of SailGP’s Better Sport strategy to accelerate inclusion, inspire change and provide more opportunities for women at the elite level of sailing.

For New Zealand, [Liv Mackay](#) is the strategist for the SailGP team the Black Foils.


“There’s still lots to improve and we can get a lot better to reach that equity ... [but] it’s created a nice pathway and it’s an exciting time to be a part of it,” van der Velden said.


A [record breaking crowd of 22,000 spectators](#) is expected over two days of racing taking place on Saturday and Sunday.


*The Press* previously reported last year’s [SailGP Christchurch event](#) gave [a “huge boost” to interest in sailing across Canterbury clubs](#), and there was “a massive buzz” about it coming back.

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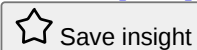


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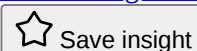


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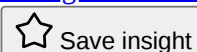


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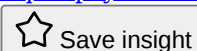
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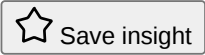
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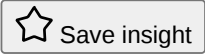
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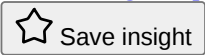
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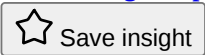
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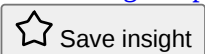
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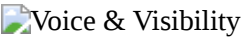
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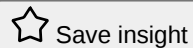
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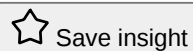
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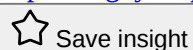
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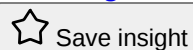
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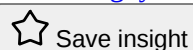
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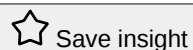
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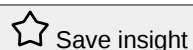
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