

# Article Title: Female Sailor Outraged After 66-Year-Old Man Swept Women's Sailing Competition

Link: <https://www.iwfeatures.com/profile/female-sailor-outraged-after-66-year-old-man-swept-womens-sailing-competition/>

Organization: Independent Womens Forum

Author: Andrea Mew ( <https://www.iwfeatures.com/author/andrea-mew/> )

This document is intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom it was provided and may contain confidential information. Any unauthorized review, use, disclosure, or distribution is strictly prohibited. This document is Copyright 2024, Jennifer W DesCombes, all rights reserved. Permission to use the information in this document can be obtained by contacting the author. Information contained within this document that is available from other published sources may be used without the author's permission.

## Factual Errors:

**Top Photo - The boats shown are Opti's, not Naples Sabots**

**Title "Female Sailor Outraged After 66-Year-Old Man Swept Women's Sailing Competition".**

Ms. DesCombes did not sweep the competition. In the five regattas, Ms. DesCombes had the following finishes:

- NHYC on 19 May - 3rd Place
- MBYC on 22 June - 3rd Place
- BYC on 28 September - 1st Place
- ABYC on 20 October - 2nd Place
- SDYC on 16 November - 1st Place

A "sweep" [defined in sporting terms as when one competitor wins all the matches in a series without losing any] would imply that Ms. DesCombes won all five races.

The following is from the SCWSA website ( <https://naples-sabot.org/scwsa> )

Table 1: 2024 SCWA Women's Division B (from ( <https://naples-sabot.org/scwsa> )

| 2024 SCWSA WOMEN'S Division B |                    |        |                |              |                    |                   |            |           |     |               |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|--------|----------------|--------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------|-----------|-----|---------------|
|                               |                    | DNC= 8 |                | NHYC         | MBYC               | BYC               | ABYC       | SDYC      |     |               |
| Place                         | SKIPPER            | SAIL # | CLUB           | Sabot Invite | Dave Watry Regatta | Little Old Ladies | Ladies Day | San Diego | Sub | Total w/Throw |
| 1                             | Jennifer DesCombes | 10308  | SSC            | 3            | 3                  | 1                 | 2          | 1         | 10  | 7             |
| 2                             | Gail Kalscheur     | 10355  | BYC            | 5            | 2                  | 3                 | 3          | 2         | 15  | 10            |
| 3                             | Ruth Jones         | 10340  | MBYC           | 1            | 1                  | 2                 | 8          | 8         | 20  | 12            |
| 4                             | Helen Burdett      | 8257   | Victory at Sea | 8            | 8                  | 8                 | 1          | 8         | 33  | 25            |
| 5                             | Deon Macdonald     | 10161  | NHYC           | 2            | 8                  | 8                 | 8          | 8         | 34  | 26            |
| 6                             | Eva Evans          | 10327  | BYC            | 8            | 8                  | 4                 | 8          | 8         | 36  | 28            |
| 7                             | Kristen Whitney    | 8800   | NHYC           | 4            | 8                  | 8                 | 8          | 8         | 36  | 28            |

It should be noted that since sailing the final race of the SCWSA series, Ms. DesCombes has become a full member of the Balboa Yacht Club (BYC) and is thus a member of both SSC as well as BYC.

**Subtitle: “A 66-year-old man who recently began identifying as a woman dominated a women’s sailing regatta, sparking outrage from one female fleet captain who refuses to sail against him.”**

Out of a field of seven competitors that participated in the Women’s B class, it is inaccurate to state that Ms. DesCombes “dominated” the five-event regatta. Until incurring a physical injury, unrelated to sailing, which prevented her from competing in the last two regattas in the series, Ruth Jones (MBYC) was dominating with two first-place finishes and a second-place finish (refer Table 1).

**Paragraph 5: “It all began in 2023 when Jennings said the man first expressed interest in sailing at her club.”**

Ms. DesCombes began sailing at the Balboa Yacht Club in August of 2022, not in 2023. Ms. DesCombes has been sailing Sabots since the age of 12.

**Paragraph 7: “As captain of her club’s A Fleet, Jennings said she had several concerns...”**

There is no such position at Ms. Jennings’s home club, this is a fabrication.

**Paragraph 8: “Making matters worse, Jennings alleged DesCombes told another sailor he was not planning to get sexual reassignment surgery.”**

Ms. DesCombes has never discussed not obtaining gender-confirming surgery with any other sailors. In the past, Ms. Jennings has made disrespectful comments about Ms. DesCombes’s gender configuration, and unless Ms. Jennings is willing to provide written testimony from the anonymous sailor cited, Ms. DesCombes considers this statement as inflammatory and a complete fabrication.

**Paragraph 12: DesCombes did not respond to IW Features’ request for comment.**

Ms. DesCombes reports that this is incorrect. Ms. DesCombes can find no record, either via email, text, or voice call, of ever having been contacted by IW Features. IW Features would have had several ways to contact Ms. DesCombes if they had tried, as Ms. Jennings could have provided this information.

## **Comments on Sailing:**

**Paragraphs 17 through 20.**

**Paragraph 17: Her grievances are justified. According to Jennings, men have several advantages in Sabot sailing, though it might not seem that way at first.**

There is little or no evidence to support the allegation that males have any advantage in Sabot sailing. The International Naples Sabot Association (INSA) perceives there is no advantage to either gender and holds all of its championship regattas without regard to gender.

The INSA does have divisions by age, with championships awarded in multiple age categories with self-assessed skill brackets (A, B, C, Silver, etc.).

**Paragraph 18: Since Sabot boats are small, the heavier and larger you are, the slower you risk going. Jennings said this has led several female Sabot sailors to let their guard down when competing against the male.**

Ms. DesCombes reports that all of the competitors within the Women's B group know each other, and they are aware of each other's skills and capabilities. Ms. DesCombes further attests that the Women's B group is a competitive group - very unlikely to "let their guard down"

**Paragraph 19: Yet, when males compete against females in Sabot, the male sailor will almost always win, Jennings said. In fact, in the Junior Sabot Nationals, where young boys and girls compete against one another, just five female sailors have won since 1948, she pointed out.**

Ms. DesCombes responds that the data set selected by Ms. Jennings, Junior Sabot sailors, is a very poor representative group. Over the period utilized, 1948 to the present, girl sailors, until very recently, had very limited access to support and training. In general, this limited access was unfortunately true for many sports that were considered a boy's (or male) activity.

Ms. DesCombes indicates that INSA Masters Master Championship (age 40 and older) is a much better data set to evaluate. In this group, since 1974 (the first year of the Class), males have won approximately 60% of the regattas. If the dominance over the last decade of Scott Finkboner (MBYC) is removed from the data, the male/female ratio is more balanced at 53% male and 47% female.

However, the dominant factor in these champions is not their gender, but their sailing skill - they are all excellent sailors with years of experience.

As mentioned in the web-article, weight is always a factor in small-boat sailing. A Sabot hull weighs approximately 65 LBS, thus, every extra pound is important. The INSA recognizes this fact and requires offset weight ('added weight' per INSA Rules) for very lightweight competitors in its various championships. Ms. DesCombes reports she typically weighs 40 LBS more than most of her competitors.

**Paragraph 20: From faster reaction time, to larger hands, to superior grip strength, and more, Jennings explained that male sailors have a notable advantage against female sailors.**

Concerning "reaction time", Ms. DesCombes cites the journal article *A comparative study of visual and auditory reaction times on the basis of gender and physical activity levels of medical first year students*, authors Aditya Jain, Ramta Bansal, Avnish Kumar, and KD Singh, published in the *International Journal of Applied Basic Medical Research*, 2015 May-Aug;5(2):124-127. doi: 10.4103/2229-516X.157168, published online by the NIH National Library of Medicine ( <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4456887/#T4> ). This article indicates that although there is a small difference in response times in the general population of the participants (on the order of 15/1,000 of a second, 15 ms), for those active participants, the report states, "However when regularly exercising male (n = 16) and female students (n = 4) were compared as shown in Table 2c, nonsignificant differences were obtained."

Even if there were a difference in males and females within the Sabot sailing community, at 10 knots, very fast for a Sabot, a difference in response time of 15 ms results in boat movement of less than 2 inches.

Concerning “larger hands, to superior grip strength”, Ms. DesCombes comments “If children younger than 12 years old can competitively race in Sabots in all weather conditions, then hand size and superior grip strength are not a factor in competitive Sabot sailing.”

## **Comments on Journalistic Standards:**

Ms. DesCombes recognizes that all organizations and publications have their target audiences and that when writing for these organizations the authors may tend to reflect the leanings of their constituents. However, most news organizations adhere to a set of journalistic standards, such as the Associated Press (AP) Stylebook. The following guidelines from the AP Stylebook, which are similar in many ways to other publication guidelines, were not followed, or even attempted to be followed, within the Independent Womens Forum web-article”

- *Use the correct term: Use "transgender" as an adjective to describe people whose gender identity differs from their sex assigned at birth.*
- *Avoid outdated terms: Avoid using "transsexual" or "tranny".*
- *Use "sex assigned at birth": Use this term when referring to someone who does not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth.*
- *Use a person's preferred pronouns: Respect LGBTQ subjects' preferred pronouns.*

Of these, Ms. DesCombes reports that the most egregious is the constant use of male pronouns and the repeated identifier of male.