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SHOW



William Pank receives his award after his memorable year.

Picture: PAUL WYETH

Young William gets his reward after a year to remember on the water

William Pank from Norfolk Broads Yacht Club has won the RYA Eastern Youth Champion award.

The youngster was presented with his trophy at a ceremony at the RYA Suzuki Dinghy Show at London's Alexandra Palace by Helena Lucas, Paralympic sailing gold medallist.

William, who turns 14 this month, has competed in both the Optimist and Feva classes around Europe with plenty of success.

He began 2016 by coming second in the Optimist Spring Championships in Cardiff. He followed this up by qualifying for the Gold Fleet in Palamos, Spain.

He qualified for a place in the European Optimist team and competed in Crotona in Italy as part of the British team, finishing as second Briton despite a tough start.

Sailing

He was also part of the Great Britain team sailing in Naples, Braassermeermeer and Monaco.

He finished sixth overall in the British Open Optimist Championships and second in the British Optimist Nationals in Largs.

He was also sixth in the Inland Optimist Championships, second in the in the Late Summer Championships and won the Winter Championships at Datchet.

At the same time he teamed up with his friend Finley Dickinson to compete in the Feva Class. They began slowly, finishing 10th at the Spring Championships in their first event and first sail together.

They then won the Inland Championships at Queen Mary Sailing Club and followed this up by winning the 2016 Feva World

Championships in Santander, Spain, taking both the open trophy and the junior event.

This victory triggered an unexpected invite to the Endeavour Trophy event at Burnham on Crouch.

The boys sailed extremely well and topped their year off by winning race four from Olympian Ben Saxton before finishing 18th overall.

Having described the past year as "incredible", William is currently in the National Optimist Squad and is focused on trying to go one better than last year and qualify to represent his country at the Optimist Worlds in Thailand whilst also attempting to defend the Feva World title in Holland.

For more information on the RYA Regional Youth Champion Award visit www.rya.org.uk/go/youthchampion