Laser World Championship 2008

Tom Slingsby from Australia successfully defended his 2007 Laser World title on his home waters at the NSW Central Coast town of Terrigal following the abandonment of the final days racing due to rough conditions.

Slingsby’s talent and flair has lifted the sailor into the record books as only the second Australian sailor to win back to back titles in this competitive class; Glenn Bourke won three consecutive titles from 1988 to 1990.

One hundred and sixty of the world’s best sailors representing 57 nations contested the Championship in conditions that were mostly very windy southerlies on big seas and swell.

“Fresh is my preferred conditions,” Slingsby confessed, “but I am getting there in the light winds.

The 23 year-old paid tribute to second place getter Julio Alsogaray from Argentina, who won the opening two races in light shifty south-easterly winds on a huge swell and sea. It was to be the only light air day of the event. Alsogaray held the lead for the first 3 races before the discard gave Slingsby the edge. In races 7 and 8 Slingsby handed the lead back to Alsogaray when he only managed 14th and 18th positions.

One hundred and sixty of the world’s best sailors representing 57 nations contested the Championship in conditions that were mostly very windy southerlies on big seas and swell.

“Julio did a great job here; he didn’t finish any worse than ninth place. He will be a big threat at the Games in China. He sailed awesome,” said Slingsby who finished the event on 27 points. “He has all the tools to win in any conditions, but in China, it will be whoever can perform best that week,” Slingsby said.

While Slingsby only had two blips in his score, the silver medalist, Julio Alsogaray from Argentina, took charge at the top of the scoreboard from the first day, only losing his lead marginally on two days to Slingsby.

Alsogaray finished the Championship on 29 points, just two points adrift of the Australian.

One ponders what may have been had two more races been sailed.

Continued on Page 2.

World Laser 4.7 Championship 2007

Hermanus, near Cape Town in South Africa hosted the 2007 World Laser 4.7 Youth Championships, starting just after the Christmas break, the Championships had a friendly atmosphere with 118 competitors from 27 countries in 6 continents. The Championships opened with the ‘Mixing of the waters’ ceremony in which representatives from each country poured water from their home sailing area into a large ceremonial vessel. This was then blessed and taken to the water’s edge and poured into the waters of Hermanus Yacht Club.

Light breezes for the start of the Championship led to postponements and a late start on the first day, finally with two races concluded with Elisabetta Macchini (ITA) loosing out to Andraz Gulic (SLO) on the last beat in the yellow fleet and the blue fleet being dominated by the Polish team.

As the wind steadied on day 2, the introduction of the black flag helped to control the sailors enthusiasm at the starts. The morning saw Marko Peresa (CRO) and Alex Zimmermann (PER) victorious. As the day progressed the wind grew to around 14 knots finishing with Baepi Pinna (BRA) having a successful day to end up just one point behind Championship leader Andraz.

More delays on day 3 as the wind refused to steady over the course area, finally the wind settled and peaking at around 16 knots the wind slowly eased. Day 3 saw the first win for a local sailor as Mathew Shaw (RSA) led home race 6 in the yellow fleet and Canberk Karahan (TUR) scored two second places.

In the blue fleet again the Polish reigned supreme with a win for Piotr Ogrodnik (POL) followed by a win for Alexandre Alencastro (BRA) who was chased to the finish by Zimmermann and Travis Dow (NZL).

Day 4 began and more delays – but this time the delays were due to the celebrations of the night before as four hundred competitors and supporters saw in the New Year together with a large party and fireworks. The wind settled again later in the afternoon and the first day’s racing of 2008 commenced. After several recalls the yellow fleet eventually got away with Boris Bignoli (ITA) leading home and Lina Stork (CRO), the first of the girls to cross the finish line.

In the blue fleet on the first downwind leg there was a definite split between the race leaders and the main chasing group.

Continued on Page 3.
After a short 30-minute “Medal Race” in the Laser and Laser Radial, US SAILING’s Rolex Miami OCR officially concluded. The regatta, an ISAF Grade 1 world ranking event that attracts elite sailors as well as up-and-comers, hosted 369 sailors from 34 countries across 4 Olympic Classes. The awarding of gold, silver and bronze medals was based on scores from fleet racing that began on Monday 28th January for everyone, however, because of a new sailing format that will debut at the 2008 Olympic Games in Qingdao, China, the Olympic-class sailors stayed on for an extra day. Fleet racing scores determined the top-ten sailors, who then advanced to the medal-racing round, which counted double in the scoring and acutely effected strategy plays for medals.

"All I could think was 'I have to catch up, I have to catch up!'" said the overall winner, Paige Railey, who finished 5th in the Laser Radial class. Her closest competitor in overall standings, Railey and Tunnicliffe are three points ahead of Tunnicliffe in the final shadowing boats. In the end, she finished 2nd to 10th places overall changed daily and the Argentine sailboat, not one of the hot favourites going into the title, was obviously the one to beat. “For sure I came to do a job, to come and I will do everything in my power to do that,” he said in the closing stages of the Championship. In any other event always finishing in the top ten a 160 boat fleet would have guaranteed a title.

Of the sailors ranked by ISAF No’s 2 to 10 in the world, only two finished inside a top 10 result. World No. 9, Michael Bullot (NZL) finished fifth, 24 points behind Slingsby. World No. 2, Paul Goodison, placed seventh, 44 points away from the winner. Already chosen to represent New Zealand in Beijing, Andrew Murdoch, the World Rank No. 4, fell short with a 13th overall finish. Both his Kiwi team mates beating him. Athens silver medalist and Beijing bound Andreas Geritzer (AUT) missed out making the Gold fleet in 34th place. World No. 11, Javier Hernandez, including a win in one race, ensured a bronze medal for the Spanish sailor. Ten make Beijing Games cut From the 26 nations vying for the final 10 Laser places for nation qualification to the Beijing Games, Jeemin Ha made Korea proud as the first one in, when he made it into the Gold fleet. The other nine nations qualified from the Silver fleet. They are: Switzerland (Max Bulley finished 55th), Japan (Yoshi Iijima, 63rd), Malaysia (Kevon, 69th), Singapore (Liang Seng Koh, 77th), Venezuela (Jose Ruiz, 80th), Dominican Republic (Raul Aguayo, 85th), Russia (Igor Lisovenko 86th), Hungary (Zsombor Berecz 93rd) and Guatemala (Juan Maegli, 99th).

Qualifying a nation does not necessarily mean an automatic entry to the Games for the competitor who qualified his country. Competitors may have to sail off against their countrymen in other regattas to claim their Beijing selection to meet their National Olympic Committee qualification criteria.

Hosted by Gosford Sailing Club the Laser World Championship was made possible by the NSW State Government, including contributions from NSW and the Department of Sport and Recreation. Other major sponsors included Gosford City Council, Ace Conveyor Group and Star of the Sea Luxury Apartments.

Full Results are available at: http://aus08.laserinternational.org/
The final day saw the south-easterly wind increase in strength to around 20 knots with gusts of 25. The Race Committee postponed the start and held the fleet ashore after measuring sustained gusts of 27 to 32 knots. 40 minutes later the wind had subsided back to its earlier range and the fleet were called afloat for some exhilarating and tough sailing.

The Gold fleet, sailing first, started at their second attempt and immediately attacked the left hand side of the course. In a balanced upwind leg Luciano Hlanuda (CRO) led around the first mark closely followed by Lazaros Theodosiadias (GRE), Baepi Pinna (BRA) in 2nd place and a tight bunch behind. The strong winds had already turned the tables on overnight leader Andraz Gulic who struggled to finish in 50th place. Fellow lightweight Boris Bignoli was also buried in the late twenties.

Theodosiadias caught a good gust on the downwind leg leaving the rest of the fleet standing. By the time he got to the top of the second windward leg he was 75 seconds ahead of Filip Kobielski who had climbed from fifth place. On the next downwind leg Theodosiadiads extended further and cruised home to take the winning gun 2 minutes ahead of Kobielski and Kostomoiris, Matika and Pinna followed in 4th and 5th places. After ten races Bignoli was at the top of the leader board with Gulic 5 points behind.

Contrary to the first race, the fleet took the right hand side of the course for the first leg of the second race of the day. At the first mark Kostomoiris rounded first ahead of the rapidly improving Utka Gonener and the expected pair of Matika and Pinna.

Following a hard fought battle the consistent performances of Croatia’s Filip Matika proved successful and he was crowned 2007 Laser 4.7 Champion, closely followed by Baepi Pinna and Alexander Zimmermann in 2nd and 3rd places respectively.

It was a double celebration for the host country of the 2008 Laser 4.7 Worlds as Tajana Ganic’s scores of 29 and 25 in the mixed fleet were just enough to give her a two-point advantage over Ewa Makowska from Poland, giving her the World Laser 4.7 title.

The conditions had become more overcast and the breeze continued to build with a short chop developing on the race course. Leading girl Ewa Makowska (POL) cot fair well in the changeable conditions and by the end of the second beat had lost the lead to Ivan Zотов (RUS). At the end of the race Zотов claimed 1st place, followed by Makowska in 2nd.

The wind disappeared from the Cape Region of South Africa on day 5. The sailors waited ashore for several hours and were then called afters this a fickle breeze prevailed in the afternoon. Several attempts were made to start - each time aborted due to major shifts in the wind direction. The Race Committee conceded at 5.30pm, with the fleet being split into Gold and Silver fleets for the final two days of the Championship.

After two days of frustrating weather, the first day of finals racing saw a fresh south-easterly wind. Now split into Gold and Silver fleets, the first race saw a clean start in around 10 to 12 knot of winds. The port end of the line was favoured, allowing Rafał Młczarczyk (POL) to port tack the fleet. Series leader Gulic chose the port end of the line and worked the left hand side of the course, as did most of the fleet. However it was Martino Tortarolo (ITA) who led George Kostomoiris (GRE) round the first mark. Gulic rounded in 16th while his closest rival, Alex Zimmermann was 8th. The second beat again saw the fleet preferring the left of the course. The eventual race winner was Travis Dow who made a good recovery giving his the world Laser 4.7 title.

The class accounts and a three year forecast were discussed together with the plans and objectives for the future development of the class and its administration. The financial situation of the association is sound. An extract of the 2006 and 2007 accounts are published in this Laser World.

Reports from each region show that in general the International Laser Class continues as a global leader with growth recognised in several regions for the Laser 4.7 and youth sailing on the whole.

As a result of the continuing interest in youth sailing around the world the ILCA office was asked to research the feasibility of a World Laser Standard Youth Championship meant for sailors from 17 to 20.

A lengthy discussion ensued on the management and possible re-organisation of the global and regional structure. With the ever-increasing number of countries becoming members of the International Laser Class and the growth in the interest of Laser sailing in previously in-active countries there may be the need in the future to re-organise the present structure of regions and districts.

Finally the council addressed a number of proposals for class rule interpretations and rule clarifications all of which will be further reviewed by the Technical and Measurement committee. The class rule interpretations will be published if agreed and any rule changes will be put to a member’s vote.
Having good boat speed downwind is essential if you are going to win races, it is also a great way of escaping from the middle of the fleet back to the leading bunch. Sailing the shortest route to the mark is very rarely the fastest, by sailing larger angles downwind you can achieve greater speeds and have the ability to catch waves. The most important sail control downwind is the kicker, by sailing with a looser kicker the boat becomes more versatile helping it to accelerate out of changes in course.

To help catch waves you nearly have to forget about the direction of the next mark, just concentrate on catching waves and surfing them for as long as possible.

See Training Exercise 4 (right).

Running in light winds

Sail Settings

The kicker should be loose enough to enable the top of the sail to twist away and to flex. This helps the sail react to gusts and alterations in course without you needing to adjust the mainsheet. As the leech moves the sail pants and the boat is propelled forward, the outhaul should now be as loose as it ever needs to be with just over a hand’s width between the foot of the sail and the boom cleat; this creates power and drive in the lower third of the sail. Ease the Cunningham to allow fullness in the sail. The critical control is the kicker and this should be set “by eye”. When sailing by the lee, look at the leech around the top batten, this area of the sail should be able to move between 10 and 30 cm fore and aft. If the leech is tight and the movement is restricted ease the kicker and if it is moving more than 30 cm, tighten the kicker slightly.

Technique

In light winds it is important to keep all movements slow and smooth to keep the wind in the sail stable and attached, if the boat is rocking around then the air flow over the sail will be disrupted and this will cause the sail to lose drive. Sailing by the lee is often faster in light winds, the boat needs to be heeled slightly to windward, to reduce the wetted surface area, this also helps gravity to keep the boom out. Your body weight should be kept forward in the cockpit to keep the transom clear of the water and the daggerboard should be raised around 15 cm, this helps the boat to track in a straight line when sailing large angles by the lee.

Boat speed in these conditions will be determined by wind speed more than technique, be observant and keep looking behind for wind. When sailing in a gust the boat can be sailed closer to a downwind course, as the wind drops steer back towards a bigger angle by the lee.
Running in medium winds
Sail Settings
The sail settings are very similar to light wind settings, again the kicker being the most crucial. The mainsheet no longer needs to be eased beyond 90 degrees as there will be more pressure in the sail causing the top to twist open, the top of the sail can twist beyond 100 degrees of the centreline even when the boom is at 80 degrees.

Technique
As the wind increases and the boat starts to plane the weight needs to move back in the boat, this helps to keep the bow clear of the waves. In marginal planing conditions the weight should be moved forward as the boat slows and aft as the boat accelerates.

Running in strong winds
Sail Settings
In strong winds it is less important to ease theouthaul as you are not looking for any extra drive from the sail, it is however important to release the Cunningham and the kicker. If the Cunningham is left on then the leech will be really soft and will lead to too much twist in the head of the sail, this leaves the boat difficult to sail and often causes the boat to capsize to windward. If the kicker is not released then the boat is very twitchy because the leech is unable to soak up changes in steering and wind, leading the boat tripping and spinning into the wind and capsizing to leeward. Ease the kicker again so the leech moves up to 30 cm or 12 inches remembering that this is a much tighter kicker due to there being more pressure in the sail.

Technique
Sheet the mainsheet in slightly to help stability, the boom angle should be around 70 degrees but the top of the sail about 95 degrees as the leech twists away.

Goodies Guide for sailing on a run
• As the boat slows the angle to the wind needs to decrease; do this by either bearing the boat away more to sail by the lee, or by sailing higher towards a reach.
• When the boat accelerates the speed needs to be turned into vmg and the boat should be sailed more downwind.
• The daggerboard should only be raised 15 cm so that the boat can track in a straight line.

When sailing in waves steer the boat onto different angles to help catch waves and increase speed. When the boat changes direction trim the mainsheet to compensate for the change in direction. To change direction try to use the heel of the boat to assist the turn, heeling the boat to leeward to head up, and leaving the boat to windward to help bear away. This will reduce the amount of rudder needed.

Running in strong winds
Sail Settings
In strong winds it is less important to ease theouthaul as you are not looking for any extra drive from the sail, it is however important to release the Cunningham and the kicker. If the Cunningham is left on then the leech will be really soft and will lead to too much twist in the head of the sail, this leaves the boat difficult to sail and often causes the boat to capsize to windward. If the kicker is not released then the boat is very twitchy because the leech is unable to soak up changes in steering and wind, leading the boat tripping and spinning into the wind and capsizing to leeward. Ease the kicker again so the leech moves up to 30 cm or 12 inches remembering that this is a much tighter kicker due to there being more pressure in the sail.

Technique
Sheet the mainsheet in slightly to help stability, the boom angle should be around 70 degrees but the top of the sail about 95 degrees as the leech twists away.

Try not to run dead downwind, steer positively so that you are either by the lee or on a broad reach and sit back as far as you can. It can often help if you hold the tiller extension at the tiller to extension flexi-joint which will give a more positive feel to the rudder.

If things start to get a bit hairy then sit tight and try to keep the boat in a straight line, sheeting the mainsheet in by about a metre. The worse thing you can do is sheet out or alter course as this makes the boat unstable and uncontrollable because all the forces are moving. The daggerboard again should only be raised up to 20 cm to help tracking and in the worst case scenario there will be something to stand on if things go wrong!
With the 2008 Olympic Games fast approaching, we review a few of the strong contenders for the Laser Standard and Laser Radial Olympic Gold Medals.

### In the Standard Fleet

**Tom Slingsby**
With the top spot in the World ranking and the 2007 and 2008 World Champion titles under his belt, Slingsby's performance speaks louder than words. He was already selected late last year to compete at the Games for Australia and his win in Terrigal confirmed his rightful place in China.

### In the Radial Fleet

**Tania Elias Calles Wolf**
As No 1 in the ISAF Laser Radial rankings Tania is definitely a strong contender for the Olympic title. She was 6th in the 2007 ISAF Games, 8th at the Qingdao Olympic Test Event and 4th at the Asia Pacific Regatta at the beginning of 2008.

**Anna Tunnicliffe**
Anna Tunnicliffe (USA) admitted to finding the conditions in Cascais tricky but still managed a 5th place at the 2007 ISAF Games. She has since won the long running battle against Paige Railey for the title of USA No 1 and also won the Qingdao Olympic Test Event in 2007. Anna stands a very good chance of a medal if she is on form.

**Evi Van Acker**
The two times European Champion was disappointed with a 13th at the 2007 ISAF Games. She came 3rd at the Qingdao Olympic Test Event and is currently 3rd in the ISAF rankings.

**Sarah Blanck**
Sarah Blanck (AUS) missed out on a medal in Athens by 1 point in the Europe Class. This year she has won the AUS Nationals, The Sydney International Regatta and the Asia Pacifics.

**Tatiana Drozdovskaya**
The surprising 2007 World Champion from Belarus will be defending her title in New Zealand before going to the Olympics. Can the 1st ever Belarusian World Champion win again?

**Jo Aleh**
New Zealand’s No 1 sailor was 8th at the 2007 ISAF Games, 2nd at the Qingdao Test Event and 3rd at both the Sydney International Regatta and the Asia Pacifics. She is one of the top light wind sailors which could be an advantage in Qingdao.

**Lijia Xu**
The 2006 World Champion is China’s biggest sailing hope for the Olympics and is expected to perform well on her home turf. She’s not performed so well in 2007 but maybe she can deliver a surprise in 2008.

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**Paul Goodison**
The British No 1 sailor has got to be a strong contender for the Olympic Gold. Goodison won the Asia Pacifics at the beginning of 2008, his first regatta since breaking his wrist 3 months ago. He came 7th at the recent 2008 World Standards.

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**Matias Del Solar**
The 32 year old from Chile is currently number 3 in the world ranking. He came 7th in the 2007 ISAF Games, 13th at the Olympic test event in Qingdao, and although he only finished 25th in Terrigal he stands a good chance of grabbing that precious medal.

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He covered Rogachenko, as Rogachenko - a member of US SAILING’s Elite Youth Development Team -- was the only one who could steal away his gold medal. “It was not necessary to win the race or take risks,” said Grabowski, who is a sure bet to represent his country at the Olympic Games. Grabowski strayed from the norm by choosing to come to Miami rather than participate in the Laser World Championships in Australia this February. Conflicting World Championships were the reason. “For me it made sense to sail in a place with lighter winds that will be more like Qingdao,” said Grabowski.

Polish Laser sailor Maciej Grabowski won the gold medal in the men’s Laser fleet on the strength of a third-place finish. With the USA’s Kyle Rogachenko only six points behind him, Grabowski “couldn’t let him go”.

### Results

<table>
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<th>Laser Standard</th>
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<td>Grabowski, Maciej POL</td>
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<td>Tunnicliffe, Anna USA</td>
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<td>Soderstrom, Karin SWE</td>
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**Laser Asia Pacifics 2008**

**Reigning World Standard** Senior champion Tom Slingsby (AUS) led the Championship (hosted by Royal Brighton Yacht Club) on Day 1, but an OCS on Day 2 dropped him down the leader board. However, once he dropped that result, Slingsby proved he was the man to beat ahead of the Worlds at Terrigal in February, but it was Paul Goodison who stole gold on the final day.

Goodison, who will represent the British team at the Olympics, produced mixed results early on, but quietly worked his way to the top, drawing level with Slingsby on the penultimate day of the regatta.

The Medal race was the deal breaker. Mike Bullot (FRA) proved no match for Goodison, with Michael Leigh third, Milan Vujasanovic (CRO) fourth, Andrew Murdoch (NZL) fifth, Bernard Luttmer (CAN) sixth and Slingsby seventh.

Goodison’s second gave him the gold medal ahead of Andrew Murdoch (silver) and Slingsby (bronze) who finished 10 points behind Goodison and one behind Murdoch.

The Medal race was difficult and frustrating for all. Slingsby accepts what happened, but said afterwards: “You couldn’t pick it. It was so light and fluky. I had the lead early on, but I went to the back of the field on a big shift. I couldn’t recover. It was hard.”

He said Goodison, who was in Melbourne contesting a first major regatta since breaking his wrist, will be difficult to beat at the Worlds, along with Murdoch, Michael Leigh and others.

Slingsby, though, is on top of his game, sailing consistently at the top in all conditions. He counted five wins and two third places in his tally, only straying outside top three twice, including his OCS. Along with the others, Slingsby, who won the Australian Laser National title a week prior, will take a short break, then get back into training, both on and off the water, in preparation for the Laser World’s.

Goodison, who won two races and placed top three in five races, is dangerous when in peak form, as is Murdoch, who clocked up three wins at the regatta.

Sarah Blanck’s (AUS) gold medal win at the Asia Pacific Radial Women’s Championship was one of the more decisive victories of the regatta; a 21 point margin to second placed Sari Multala (FIN) the runner up at the 2007 ISAF Worlds, and a further point to Jo Aleh (NZL).

Counting four each of wins and second places in her score, Blanck tripped only once with an affordable 16th place, subsequently used as a discard. She left the event with two things in mind, winning the March Laser Radial Worlds in New Zealand and bringing home an Olympic medal from China.

Coming fresh from her National title win the previous week, Blanck was ecstatic to win Asia Pacific gold at her home club, the Brighton Yacht Club, after finishing third in a waffly and light Medal race.

Since enlisting the coaching services of Sydney 2000 Laser bronze medallist and 2006 World Champion Michael Blackburn, Blanck has shown a new determination and is a much more self-assured person these days.

“I’m feeling a lot more comfortable and I know where I’m heading. To win at Sydney, the Nationals and now here, confirms to me I am heading in the right direction. I am more confident, especially in the light weather against people like Jo Aleh who is brilliant in light air.” Aleh still has the edge in light weather though, winning the double points medal race and the previous day’s race, in extremely light winds.

Multala won silver despite a disappointing ninth place in the Medal race in which Nathalie Brugger (SUI) finished second. The Finish girl kept Blanck honest from Day 1, winning three races. But three results outside the top three, in addition to her Medal race score, let Multala down.

World ranked No. 3 Tania Elias Calles from Mexico finished fourth. One point away, China’s Olympic medal hope and 2006 World Champion, Lijia Xu was fifth and Laura Baldwin (GBR) sixth.

Xu, only 20, is sure to perform well on her home turf at the Olympic Games. Her country expects big things from her. Baldwin is not one of the three British girls in contention for Olympic selection, but her performance at the Sydney International Regatta and here in Melbourne suggests that should be otherwise.

The Laser Radial Men’s gold went to Greg Adams (AUS) who before the Medal race was 18 points ahead of fellow Australian and Youth sailor on the move, Klade Hauschmidt, who started the final day in fourth place overall, but came home well to claim silver. Bronze went to Richard Bott (AUS).

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Full results available at www.sailmelbourne.com.au

www.laserinternational.org
6th Caribbean Laser Midwinter Regatta

On the second start of the 6th Caribbean Laser Midwinter Regatta, held in Cabarete, the usual “Starboard” and “Protest” yelling changed into screaming when a humpback whale ducked the middle of the start line. Other surprises included a 2nd place finish in the first heat by Great Grand Master (65+ years old) David Hartman of Florida. Behind him were current North American Champion Thomas Barrows of the US Virgin Islands, and Canadian Olympic team sailors.

The three day event featured a light wind day, a strong wind day with big waves and a third day with moderate winds. Raul Aguayo of the Dominican Republic finished first, with Canadians Lee Parkhill, and Antoine Bouéilh following. 1st place Masters with Handicap was Ari Barshi from the Dominican Republic, followed by 10 times world champion Keith Wilkins of Great Britain, and Tim Landt of the USA.

Adding to the fun of the event, was the inclusion of the Laser 4.7, and Laser Radial in the same start with the full rigs. The 4.7 and Radials sailed a shorter downwind leg, to meet again with the full rigs on the weather mark. The Laser class with its different sail sizes offers an opportunity for 13 year old sailors to compete against 72 year old Laser legends.

The event was sponsored by The Marquee Sapphire, luxury beachfront condominium complex, being built in Cabarete. For more information go to www.caribwind.com

Results:

Laser Standard:
1. RAUL AGUAYO (DOM)  8pts
2. LEE PARKHILL (CAN) 16pts
3. ANTHONY BOUEILH (CAN)  23pts

Masters (with handicap):
1. ARI BARSHI (DOM)  9pts
2. KEITH WILKINS (GBR)  22pts
3. TIM LANDT (USA)  26pts

Laser Radial:
1. IRINA PEREZ  7pts
2. JORDI BROS  13pts
3. JEAN PIERRE DOMINO  19pts

Laser 4.7:
1. LUIS PRIDA  7pts
2. SEBASTIAN BROS  10pts

Aussies Rule at Australian Laser Championship

Tom Slingsby, Sarah Blanck and Rohan Langford saw off a strong International fleet of 256 Lasers to win the Australia Laser Championships at Blairgowrie (27th Dec 07 - 4th Jan 08) for the Laser Standard, Laser Radial and Laser 4.7 classes respectively.

The final 2 heats where fought in a dying northeasterly wind, which started the day at 20 knots and ended at 5 knots.

Tom Slingsby (AUS) recorded a 17 and a 5 on the final day to beat home a fast closing Michael Leigh (CAN) by 2 points (with a 3.2 score on the last day) and Nick Thompson on 30 points.

Sarah Blanck (AUS) overcame illness earlier in the week to grab 2 bullets and end the series on 20 points, 6 points clear of Jo Aleh (NZL) and Veronika Fencova (CZE) on 31 points.

Rohan Langford (AUS) sailed consistently to consolidate his early series lead to finish on 24 points with 2nd place Stephen Collings (AUS) on 47 and 3rd place Jarrad Lincoln (AUS) on 48 points.

The regatta was successfully conducted to schedule by over 125 on and off water volunteers from the Blairgowrie Yacht Squadron and the Victorian Laser Association with support from the Rye, Daveys Bay and Royal Geelong Yacht Clubs, all under the auspices of the Australian Laser Class Association and Sail Melbourne. The regatta tested new scoring software enabling competitors to receive results by SMS alongside posting to the Internet.

The Championships ended with a presentation night attended by 480 of the Laser fraternity with presentations being made by 1987 World Champion Stewart Wallace and multiple Olympic representative Michael Blackburn.

Results:

Laser Standard:
Tom Slingsby (AUS)  24 points
Michael Leigh (CAN)  26 points
Nick Thompson (GBR)  30 points

Laser Radial:
Sarah Blanck (AUS)  20 points
Jo Aleh (NZL)  26 points
Veronika Fencova (CZE)  31 points

Laser 4.7:
Rohan Langford (AUS)  24 points
Stephen Collings (AUS)  47 points
Jarrad Lincoln (AUS)  48 points

Article by Rod Austin.