Leaders Consolidate at Hyères

Thompson leads men’s fleet

Tunnicliffe dominates after 3rd women’s victory

Jon Emmett - “Be Your Own Sailing Coach”
The third leg of the ISAF Sailing World Cup arrived in Europe for the first time with the 40th Trofeo S.A.R. Princesa Sofia MAPFRE. Predominantly light winds welcomed the beginning of racing, with a maximum of 8 knots for the opening day.

Day 1 saw a new start for Carolijn Brouwer (BEL) who has chosen the Laser Radial for her next Olympic campaign. “I had not raced the Radial for 16 years! It is hard to get back to it, but I am glad we had these light conditions. It is a big change compared with the Tornado, but probably easier tactically, now I have time to think before taking a decision!!” she explained.

With a seventh and a ninth, Brouwer placed sixth overall on the first day, while team mate Laura Maes (BEL) was in second position, two points from Paige Railey (USA). The American is coming back in top form winning the first race and placing fourth in the next. Anna Tunnicliffe (USA) had a slower start in the event but made it to the top ten in ninth overall.

With racing starting at 14:00, the Laser Standard fleet sailors were the last off the water. Tonci Stipanovic (CRO) led the way in his debut.

A light to medium sea breeze increased to 14 knots on the second day of racing. With two victories, Stipanovic increased his lead in the Laser Standard by 18 points over Nick Thompson (GBR). A six-point score in a fleet of 134 sailors is a performance that could put the Croat in a great position for the Absolute trophy, a traditional prize presented by Her Majesty Queen Sofia of Spain to the class winner with least points.

Railey maintained a narrow lead over her team mates in the Laser Radial fleet. Tunnicliffe moved from ninth to second overall, two points from Railey. Tunnicliffe is currently at the top of the ISAF Sailing World Cup standings, after winning both the Rolex Miami OCR and Sail Melbourne events.

The third day of racing in Palma tested the patience of sailors and race officials with low clouds and rain delaying the expected wind. After waiting on shore and then on the water in the rain, sailors came back to shore in the afternoon having not raced.

Day four was another long day at the Regatta. The wind expected from the southwest came from the opposite direction in the morning. The race committee had to wait while the sea breeze progressively lowered and changed for a north easterly. Racing eventually started mid-afternoon.

With big clouds over the bay, the pressure was uneven on the course, which made racing very tricky. These conditions produced new heat winners in most classes.

Thompson, winner of the previous ISAF Sailing World Cup event in Miami, won the only race sailed in the Laser Standard. Overall leader Stipanovic did not fare so well, but discarded his 14-point score to keep a four-point advantage over Thompson.

In the Laser Radial, Railey and Tunnicliffe held on to the top two positions, with Tunnicliffe claiming the race.

The final day at Palma saw Thompson sail into the lead of the Laser World Cup standings. Michael Bullot (NZL) trailed the Brit in the results and the World Cup standings after placing second overall in Sail Melbourne and the Trofeo SAR Princess Sofia MAPFRE. Stipanovic finished in third position, placing him third in the World Cup Standings.

The Laser Radial fleet racing was intense and very close. Paige Railey managed to fend off Susana Romero (ESP) to finish sixth, enough to give gold to the American. “This gold medal feels amazing because I just started sailing full-time again in January,” said Railey. “It is the best feeling to come back and put everything I had into this event.”

These strong results were not enough to threaten Tunnicliffe’s lead in the ISAF World Cup Standings.

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The World number one added another 15 points to her impressive score after winning the first two events.

Full results and images can be found at: www.sailing.org.
Light Winds Test Sailors in Hyères

The 41st Semaine Olympique Française, the fourth event in the ISAF Sailing World Cup, started with a long day on the water. Racing was delayed on shore waiting for the sea breeze to wrinkle the bay in Hyères. Light and shifty winds from the south east gradually shifted to the west and the first day of racing proved tedious for the Laser sailors who experienced delays, cancellations and postponements. Veronika Fenclova (CZE) led the way in the only race sailed in the Laser Radial fleet.

The Croatian team had a promising debut in Hyères with Luka Radelic, Tonci Stipanovic and Aron Lolic taking second, third and fourth respectively in the Laser Standard. However, it was Julio Alsogaray from Argentina who took the lead having finished first and third.

Racing got back to schedule on day 2 with extra races sailed in all classes. Despite the rain, the easterly wind reached a maximum of 15 knots allowing racing to start on time. It wasn’t easy sailing, with clouds creating uneven pressure in the racing area.

Paul Goodison put in a star turn on the second day of racing, with the British skipper hitting the top of the Laser Standard leaderboard in his first ISAF Sailing World Cup appearance.

Fenclova increased her lead further in the Laser Radial with two victories and a fourth place. After taking bronze in the third ISAF Sailing World Cup event in Palma, the Czech mastered the difficult conditions and was in a strong position with a 15-point margin over second placed Katarzyna Deberny (POL). Evi Van Acker (BEL) won the last race of the day to move from fifth to third overall, one point from Anna Tunnicliffe (USA).

In the Laser Standard, Goodison led the way after winning one race and placing sixth in the next. Croatians Luka Radelic and Daniel Mihelic came in second and third. Winner of the ISAF Sailing World Cup events in Miami and Palma, Nick Thompson (GBR) made up ground after a slow start, with two second places.

“With these difficult conditions, the scores will be high and the podium open!” said Thompson.

Day 3 saw Goodison and Maxim Semerkhanov (RUS) win in their respective groups in the Laser Standard, placing Goodison first and Semerkhanov fourth. Radelic and Stipanovic were on equal points in second and third places.

“Some days it just all falls into place. You’re going fast and making good decisions.” said Goodison. “It’s nice to be back sailing again”, he commented. “With these light conditions all week, it will be good to hike again and stretch our legs!”

Goodison held on to the overall lead despite scoring big points in the penultimate day, while Stipanovic climbed to second place.

The sixth and final day of racing saw Goodison come third in the Laser Standard fleet Medal Race. However, with three sailors disqualified for premature start, and Javier Hernandez (ESP) not racing, only six sailors completed the Medal Race, which was won by Tobias Schadewaldt (GER).

Semarkhanov took silver overall with a bronze for Chilean Matias Del Solar. Nick Thompson finished sixth overall, maintaining his lead in the ISAF Sailing World Cup, while Stipanovic dropped from second to seventh.

Anna Tunnicliffe added a third ISAF Sailing World Cup appearance in front of Tina Mihelic from Croatia.
Be Your Own Sailing Coach
Introduced by Jon Emmett

After nearly a decade as a professional coach I have found there are some exercises that are so useful I use them with nearly everyone I coach, and likewise there are diagrams that I have drawn countless times. It therefore seemed a great idea to put these in a book so that those I may never have the chance to coach can benefit (after all as a sailor I had to learn many things the hard way).

My approach to coaching is identical, whether you are someone brand new to Lasers or an Olympic campaigner, and Be Your Own Sailing Coach is aimed at everyone who wants to get the most out of every hour they spend on the water (with or without a coach).

The book contains twenty chapters, each neatly divided into three sections with an extensive index so you can easily dip in and out. With the kind permission of the publishers, Wiley Nautical, below is a brief piece from Chapter 5 on starting, one of the most important aspects of a race.

At the end of Chapter five, Paul Goodison talks about his starting technique, but you are going to have to buy the book to read that!

Jon Emmett

Time, Distance and Acceleration

Quite simply, how good your start is can have a major impact on how good your finish is! With the number of discards low in most series, we can rarely afford a bad start. Starting can form a very large percentage of the race. Obviously, in conditions when you are particularly fast, the importance of a start will diminish (just do not get OCSed), but being able to start well is definitely a skill worth having, especially when competing in competitions with shorter courses, or where one side of the first beat is heavily favoured. The better you are at starting, the more difficult the starts you can attempt in a regatta situation. As with all practical skills, practice makes perfect!

All boats behave differently, and this varies as the racing area changes. (Some boats will quickly become overpowered, while others are usually underpowered.) However, the principles remain the same for single-handers, high performance boats, catamarans, yachts and everything in between (for example, boats accelerate quicker in flatter water) and so do the techniques (to get the boat up to speed). When joining a new class one of the most important things to do, is to learn how to get off the start line in good shape. Remember, a good start is one where you have clean wind, go in the direction you want and where you can hold your lane 30 seconds after the gun. Three seconds after the gun it is often not clear who has had a good start!

The exact roles within the boat will depend upon the class you sail, but it is important that you are adequately prepared (see Chapter 2) before you even approach the start line. In a boat with more than one crew, it is well worth sitting the whole team down to make a list of all the tasks to be done and the order in which to do them. Now distribute the tasks, so all the members can list the actions they need to take, and then everyone can compare. It will often come as a great surprise to see how many things need to be achieved to get a good start!

Even if you are familiar with the class and race area, it is worth going out early to practise getting the boat up to full pace, and seeing how long this takes you in terms of time and distance. The set-up for the start may also vary slightly from the set-up for the first beat, so you may need to ensure your rig set-up is suitable for the conditions. (Note: you may need to put slightly more power in the sails to cope with the confused water around the starting area.) If there are any issues, then the earlier you launch, the more time you have to rectify any mistakes.

The time it takes to accelerate depends upon the class of boat, but all boats accelerate best around their ‘designed wind’. This is usually medium airs (around 14 knots), with high performance boats getting powered up sooner than lower performance boats. In these conditions, the sails are fully powered up, but the boat is not overpowered (so crew weight obviously has an impact here). If the breeze is noticeably lighter or stronger than this, the boat will be less efficient and so will take longer to get up to full speed for the conditions. In terms of tuning the boat for acceleration, a good basis is to set the boat for medium airs, then work up or down until things are set for the day’s conditions.

Exercise 1: Time

How easy is it to remain sitting on the line, without drifting to leeward or ending up ahead to wind? Remember, as a windward boat you need space to leeward to get off the line in good shape, but more importantly you must be careful not to make contact with a leeward boat, as the last thing you want to be doing is exonerating yourself at start time.

Find a buoy. Start as close as you can, either with the mark to windward or leeward, and hold position for as long as possible.
Buoy to Windward:
Start right next to the buoy; the boat will slowly drift to leeward (the exact speed depending upon the conditions). When you are two boat lengths from the buoy, put in two tacks and start again (if the buoy is to windward).

To tack without going over the line, sheet in as little as possible to get the boat moving, over-emphasise the steering and, if possible, back the main by pushing the boom out.

When you pass, head to wind. (This will stop you going forwards, as well as helping you turn.) To get the bow down, back the jib by pulling in the ‘wrong’ sheet. With a self-tacking jib, literally pull it to windward.

Buoy to Leeward:
Start two boat lengths from the buoy and stay on the line for as long as possible. Once you get to the point where you could no longer sail over the line (DO NOT HIT THE BUOY!), reverse out, and sail back to your original starting position. To reverse, put the boat head to wind and push the boom as far forward as it will go. Remember, as you start to go backwards you have no rights and the steering will be acting in reverse!

In both starts you must not go over the line (pretend it is a black flag start).

Exercise 2: Acceleration
To practise acceleration, find two other boats of similar ability. Line up, completely stationary, with one boat length between boats, and all boats an equal distance upwind. The boat in the middle loudly shouts, ‘3, 2, 1, GO!’ and accelerates up to full speed upwind. As soon as the boats are up to speed, stop and change positions. There is no need to wait until one boat pops out of the front or back; this is not the purpose of the exercise. The leeward boat becomes the windward boat; the other two boats remain still so the old windward boat is now in the middle, calling the start, and the previous middle boat is now to leeward.

To help the boat get up to pace, you need to bear away. Get the boat to bear away without going forward (by using the rudder but not allowing the sail to fill), so the boat does not go over the imaginary line, but is in a good position to accelerate easily. This is often referred to as getting the bow down.

Top Tip:
Keep the boat flat to stop it going sideways. (If, for some reason, you wish to go sideways, simply lift the centreboard.) If you end up going head to wind, release some kicker. When you go backwards you need to keep the weight well forward to stop the transom from digging in.

Exercise 3: Distance
In an ideal world you will hit the line at full speed. You need to know how much space this will take. The class of boat will make a big difference, but so will the conditions. However, remember both the wind and the water are likely to be confused around the starting area, so it may well take more distance than you think to get up to full speed. On your own, start next to a buoy, and from stationary see how long it takes you to get up to full speed. Now go back to the line and start the same distance back. See if you have the distance about correct.

Top Tip:
Monitor the difference in distances when the wind lulls/gusts, so that near start time you never get too far from the start line. The boat will accelerate best when starting on a close reach.

When considering your start, remember that the closer you are to the favoured end, the greater your advantage (regardless of what is causing that advantage), but also the more crowded this part of the line is likely to be. If you are over, it is easy to go round the ends. However, in a black flag situation you need to be especially careful, as you are going to be more likely to have your numbers recorded.

It is also possible that the favoured end of the line may not be the favoured side of the beat (for example, you may start at the port end and wish to go right, or start at the starboard end and go left). If you are not confident of getting a good start and going the best way up the beat, you need to consider which is the more important factor.
What Makes Nick Thompson Tick?

Twenty-two year-old British Laser sailor Nick Thompson was understudy to Gold Medal winner Paul Goodison at the last Olympics in China. Now he has his sights locked on representing his country when Britain hosts the next Games in 2012.

There are many milestones to go on the road to that particular goal but after a winter spent training in Florida, Thompson has opened his 2009 campaign in fine style with back-to-back wins at the ISAF Sailing World Cup regattas in Miami and Palma. Offshore Rules, the global dingy, sportsboat and yacht racing website, spoke to him just after the Princess Sofia Regatta in Palma to find out more about what makes him tick.

This is an extract from the interview. The full interview can be found at: www.offshorerules.com.

Nick since leaving University last December you have been out in Florida, Laser training with Brad Funk. What has that been like?

Since leaving University I have been able to focus all my attention on my sailing. It was therefore important for me to get some long productive hours on the water and Florida was the ideal base to do this. Sailing out of Clearwater, Ft Lauderdale and Miami gave me a perfect mix of conditions; whilst using Brad Funk, James Espey and Paige Railey as training partners kept me on my toes whilst still having great fun. A typical day’s training would include an early morning two hour bike ride, three hour sail and an evening weight session.

Why did you choose Brad as a training partner? Who do you now believe is the better Laser sailor at the moment?

Brad was great as a training partner as he has a lot of experience, great boat speed and has a great outlook on life. He is always keen to try new ideas on the water, which would often lead to some interesting exploits, such as hiking off a balance ball in our Lasers and foiling moth sailing for co-ordination and balance. Currently I have been able to place higher in regattas than Brad with two World Cup wins in Miami and Palma and wins in the Caribbean Mid Winters and Mid winters East regatta in Clearwater. However Brad has a few areas which he can develop and I’m sure we will be seeing him at the top again soon, which just goes to show you that it doesn’t matter how long you have been sailing. Lasers there is still room for improvement.

You started off 2009 with back to back victories at the ISAF Sailing World Cup events in Miami and Palma. How important was it for you to win these?

Starting off the Season with a win in Miami and then following it up with a win in Palma was very important to me. This year is all about proving myself as a force at the top of the fleet, therefore it could not be a better start. The highlights for both regattas was my ability to stay reasonably consistent whilst my competitors struggled in the tough conditions that both events gave us.

What do you regard as your greatest Laser sailing achievement so far? Tell us about your programme for the rest of this season. What are the key goals from a results point of view?

My greatest Laser achievement to date has to be winning the ISAF Youth World Championships and the recent back to back wins at the ISAF world cup events. The rest of the year will be very busy for me as I will be competing at all of the remaining ISAF World Cup events (Hyères, Delta Lloyd Regatta, Kiel Week and Sail For Gold) as well as the European and World Championships. My main goal is to place in the top 3 at all, however I’m sure that this will be adjusted slightly later in the season so that my peak can be attained at the Worlds.

What do you believe your biggest strengths and weaknesses are as a Laser sailor?

I think my greatest assets as a Laser Sailor are my natural feel for sailing, my fitness and my drive. My weaknesses can at times be overtraining.

The biggest piece of advice for up and coming sailors is to enjoy your training and coming sailors is to enjoy your training and race as you train.

Choosing the Laser was easy for me as it is a single handed class, with a strict one design principle, thus proving close and extremely tough racing. At present I believe it to be regarded as the toughest class in the world due to the amount and depth of talent.

The biggest piece of advice for up and coming sailors is to enjoy your training and race as you train.

Don’t forget that you can vote on the five proposed rule changes, listed in LaserWorld March. These have been approved by the World Council and are now referred to all ILCA members for acceptance. The rule changes also have to be approved by the International Sailing Federation (ISAF).

Only fully paid class member votes will be counted. Please take advantage of your right to be part of this democratic process. Your vote is important.

Please vote using the voting slip, which was featured in the March edition of LaserWorld. Alternatively, you can vote online at:

www.laserinternational.org/rules2009

You can access the March edition of LaserWorld online at:

www.laserinternational.org
Sailors who competed in the Laser Europa Cup at La Marina di Scarlino in Italy enjoyed excellent racing weather.

With 6 races planned for the Laser Radial and Laser 4.7 fleets and 7 for the Laser Standard fleet, 444 sailors from 21 countries blanketed the gulf of Follonica Tuscany with their white sails.

The wind in the first day of racing was an average of 18-20 knots, with peaks of up to 24 knots from the south east. Once the wind direction had stabilised, all fleets were able to race twice.

The second day of racing saw winds of between 12 and 15 knots, making it possible to wrangle two more good races, bringing the number of races by each fleet to four.

On waking up on the third day, the athletes and organizers realized that it was a day of forced rest. A leaden sky and winds of 40 knots meant that all races were postponed for the day.

A beautiful sunny day, with winds of between 8 and 10 knots from the south south west wrapped up the regatta. The Laser Standard fleet managed three races, while the Laser 4.7 and Laser Radial fleets both raced twice.

This Europa Cup regatta, bigger than any Laser World Championship, truly tested the organisational skills of the local Laser Association and local authorities - with a great result!

“This has been a major success”, summarised Carlo Tosi, General Manager of the Club Nautico Scarlino at the end of the event. “Both the sailors and technical support were very happy with the way racing unfolded and with the reception they got back on land. Athletes got to race in conditions ranging from the sheer survival of the first day, to medium wind on the second and light breezes on the third day. The 40 volunteers who worked on the water, the presidents of the two race committees, the volunteers who served 70 kilos of pasta every day... Everyone has done a great job, working in perfect harmony.”

**Standard Class**

In first place was Rutger Van Schaardenburg from the Netherlands, followed by Italians Marco Gallo and Marco Regolo in second and third respectively. It was a close fought series with the winner leading by only one point and the two Italians at equal points.

**Radial Class**

Marcin Rudawski (POL) came first, with Marit Bouwmeester (NED) in second and Guillaume Girod (SUI) in third. Winner of the women’s division was Bouwmeester, followed by Claire Blom (NED) and Francesca Clapich (ITA).

**4.7 Class**

In the 4.7 class, Italians Giovanni Coccoluto and Federico Tani were champions in the under 18 and under 16 divisions respectively, while Russian Anna Pirogova was the best among the girls.

Full regatta results, photos and updates are posted at www.laserinternational.org.
Coccoluto Dominates Europa Cup

The third leg of the Europa Cup series in Hyères, France was smooth sailing with fair conditions. The first three days of the event saw light winds of between 5 and 8 knots, increasing to 12-15 knots on the final day, allowing 10 races in the Laser Standard and Laser 4.7 fleets, and 9 races in the Laser Radial.

Laser Standard

The Laser Standard leaderboard saw big changes throughout the event. Zsombor Berecz (HUN) had a good start and was in the lead by the second race, with Uberto Visconti Crevelli in second. Despite having a shaky start Edouardo Van Gianen (NED) was hot on Berecz’s heels and was joint second with fellow countryman Gijs Pelt by the end of race 3. The middle races saw Van Gianen and Pelt battle it out, however it was Van Gianen who pulled free and was in the lead by race 6. His strong performance continued in the latter races to put him in first position at the end of the regatta. Pelt finished second, while Rodrigo Cabaz (FRA) came third. Berecz and Crevelli finished fourth and fifth, respectively.

Laser Radial

It was a close fought race in the Laser Radial. In the women’s fleet, Mart Bouwmeester (NED) had a strong regatta, winning 4 races out of the 9 and finishing first with 17 points. Sophie de Turckheim (FRA) fought hard after a slow start but, despite winning two of the latter races, she could not keep up with Bouwmeester and finished second. Claire Blom (NED) came in third.

In the Laser Radial Men, Giacomo Sabbatini had a flying start and won the first race. However, Ben Koppelaar (NED) was not far behind him and they had a hard fight for the lead in the middle races. After winning two of the latter races, Koppelaar was eventually victorious and took the top spot on the podium. Sabbatini was just 3 points behind and came in second, while Yuri Hummel (NED) took third place.

Laser 4.7

There was excitement in the Laser 4.7 fleet with Giovanni Coccoluto (ITA) continuing to dominate the Laser Cup series. After coming second in Lugano and first in Scarlino, he again took the top spot on the podium at Hyères. Juraj Divjakinja (CRO) took silver with 30 points, 8 points behind Coccoluto, while Alberto Palmieri (ITA) was third with 71 points.

Full regatta results, photos and updates are posted at www.laserinternational.org.

World Masters Games

The Sydney 2009 World Masters Games are where everyday people can have extraordinary experiences. Held from 10-18 October 2009, the Games are open to everyone, rather than just elite athletes.

Sailing is one of 28 sports that will make up the Games, and the Laser regatta will be held at Woollahra Sailing Club, Rose Bay. Everyone from 35 years of age can compete in sailing at the Games and there are both Laser and Laser Radial Classes in four age categories.

The Games are as much about making friends and having fun as they are about playing hard and winning medals.

The social program is jam packed with activities, including what promises to be an unforgettable Opening Ceremony at Sydney Olympic Park in which the competitors will take centre stage, a Closing Ceremony in the heart of the city and daily events in the Sydney Olympic Park precinct and other social hubs around Sydney.

Register online before 31 July at:
www.2009worldmasters.com

Further information on Karatsu, including how to book accommodation, please go to the venue website:
www.karatsu-sports.jp/yacht
Don’t forget to book your accommodation early!

Sydney World Masters Games

World Laser Radial Championship Venue

The 2009 World Laser Radial Men, Women and Youth Championships will be held at the Saga Yacht Harbour in Karatsu, Japan in July and August. Here is a quick guide to what this year’s competitors can expect to see and do.

Karatsu’s scenery is a combination of mountains, rivers and, of course, ocean, which provides a natural environment for water sports. Known as a distinguished sailing location throughout Japan, Karatsu has a steady wind which blows throughout the year.

Fukuoka, Saga and Nagasaki airports are all just over an hour away, with regular buses and the subway making Karatsu easily accessible for all travellers.

On arrival at Karatsu, competitors can make use of all the amenities available. You can hire bicycles from Saga Yacht Harbour for the duration of your stay and cars can be rented from Toyota Rent-a-Car in Karatsu.

There are many things to do in Karatsu (besides sailing!). The 17th century Karatsu Castle, which overlooks the town, the Yobuko Big Bridge and the beautiful gardens all attract many visitors. Karatsu is well known for its pottery and it has a reputation for producing some of the finest ceramics in Japan. The town is also known for its fresh squid, which is served sashimi-style.

For further information on the World Laser Radial Championships, please go to:
www.laserinternational.org/events