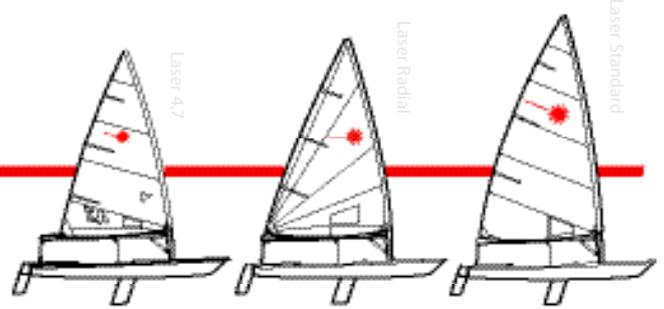


Laser World



October 2007



Mate Arapov under pressure from Paul Goodison.

suffered a disqualification for an early start. With only one top ten placing in her other 5 races she was struggling to make the top ten. Day four was sailed in gold and silver fleets and turned out to be the decider for the medal race as there was too much wind for racing on Day 5.

In 12 knots of wind dropping to 6 knots, Slingsby put his overall lead at risk with a 16th in the first race of the day. Although he won the start of the second race, he lost contact with a group of boats on the right hand side of the first leg and did well to finish 9th. In difficult conditions he maintained his lead over Arapov. Estonian Denis Karpak was the only sailor to finish both races in the top ten.

The women had arguably more difficult conditions on the same course area when they started at 1600. Xu ended her reign at the head of the leader board scoring a 21st and 22nd dropping to tenth overall on a day when only 3 women finished in single figures in each race. Ellis Wolf also had her worst day of the series scoring a 15th and a 45th. A combination of others also scoring badly

Gold for Australia & Belarus at ISAF Worlds

150 men from 59 countries and 109 women from 54 countries in the Laser and Laser Radial provided the two largest class fleets at the 2007 ISAF World Championships in Cascais, Portugal. It was particularly exciting to see the growth in country participation in the Laser Radial only 2½ years after its selection as the Olympic women's single-handed equipment.

Last year in Los Angeles, Chinese sailor Lijia Xu caused heads to turn when she took the title at her first attempt showing that even in a country without a history in the Laser Radial it is possible to get to the top quickly. Could Xu retain her title in the predicted stronger winds? 2005 Champion, Paige Railey (USA) was also an obvious challenger having won her title in strong winds.

In the men's fleet the pre-race favourites were the 2006 winner and runner up, Michael Blackburn and Tom Slingsby. Being Australian, both were expected to enjoy the stronger winds. Blackburn, at 36 years old, had experience on his side and possibly the advantage in lighter conditions while the much younger Slingsby was expected to have the edge in strong winds. If these two got locked into their own personal dual the leader of the world rankings, Paul Goodison (GBR), would always be waiting to take advantage.

The men's fleet was divided into 3 groups and the women's fleet into two groups. For the qualifier races the men's and women's fleets sailed on different course areas. Each day both fleets were changed to any one of five course areas in total, producing different wind and wave conditions daily. The wind was mainly offshore and always shifting and changing strength.

Xu came off the starting blocks in 14 to 18 knot winds determined to defend her title in the best possible way. Her two bullets in the first day of racing sent a strong message to the rest of the fleet. In the men's fleet Goodison also started well to finish the day third overall behind Mate Arapov (CRO) and Simon Grotelaschen (GER). After a bad first race Slingsby got his act together for his second race to take the winning gun in his fleet.

The women moved to the course area closest to the shore for the second day. Xu struggled in her first race playing the right hand side of the windward leg but recovered from 21st to finish 6th. She chose the same side in the second race which gave her a third bullet to maintain her overall lead. Behind her the next five sailors were separated by only five points. Slingsby posted a 1st and 2nd in his group. Grotelaschen took over the men's lead with Goodison tied in second place with Thomas Le Breton. Arapov scored a 7th and 9th and dropped to fourth overall. Following a 7th and 4th on the first day, Blackburn's defence took an irrecoverable knock when he scored two results in the twenties.

Slingsby scored 2 bullets on the third day in 25 knot winds which after a discard propelled him to the front of the leader board ahead of Le Breton and Goodison. The day started badly for Xu when she was over the line at the start but showed she was also able to handle the stronger winds by posting a 4th in the second race to be equal first with Tania Ellis Wolf (MEX) who scored 2 first places and was able to drop an 11th place. Railey also

and previously consistent results meant that she only dropped to second overall, 2 points behind new leader Petra Nieman (GER).

The following day Slingsby started the 30 minute medal race for the top ten with a 12 point lead, knowing that he had to finish 6th or better to win the title. In 12 to 14 knots of wind he sailed a conservative middle course and rounded the first mark in 8th. On the short legs in shifting winds, Slingsby worked his way through to 6th, safe in the knowledge that his nearest rival, Arapov, was always behind him.

In the women's race it was a lot closer with only 19 points separating the top ten. The wind had increased to 20 knots which was ideal for Katarzyna Szotynska (POL) who led at the first mark from Xu and at one stage was so far ahead of the chasing pack that she stopped for a moment thinking the race had been shortened or abandoned!

Continued on Page 2...



Close in the Radial Fleet.



Captain's Log

Youth is our Future

In July this year the International Olympic Committee approved a proposal by its President, Jacques Rogge, to introduce a Youth Olympics for some of the existing summer sports to be held every 4 years starting in 2010. This will be great for those who, because of their year of birth, hit the upper age limit. But, what is left for the large majority of youth interested in international competition?

Every year there is the ISAF Youth World Championship. This is another great event that is a target for competitive youth and is well supported by national authorities. Many youth sailors in each country train hard to qualify to represent their country in this event but only a few can go. In the case of the boys and girls single-handed, there is only one boy and one girl from each country when in some countries there are over 50 sailors that try to qualify. What is left for them?

There are a number of classes that organise continental and world youth championships that provide an alternative option for young sailors that do not win the trip to the ISAF Youth Worlds. In the case of the Laser Class the Laser Radial offers great racing at world and continental level with over 250 entries. In the last few years the challenge for the class has been to find a space in the popular month of July to host class events. As an ISAF Youth Class we were not allowed by ISAF to hold a youth or senior continental or world championship during a 10 day period in the early part of July. This also affects our Olympic sailors.

After a submission by the Laser Class in May ISAF agreed to relax its ruling for continental youth events and all non youth events (senior).

I believe that the ISAF Youth World Championship does not need protecting and that it is far more important to try and keep youth in our sport by offering them every opportunity to experience international competition.

Laser for Generations and Life!

1976 and 1977 Laser World Champion and very good all round sailor, John Bertrand USA, attended his second Laser Radial World Championship as coach to his son Alex. In the meantime the entry list closed for a record 418 Master entries in Roses, Spain, in October.

The Masters fleet includes 26 Female Masters and 80 Great Grand Masters (over the age of 65)!!

Jeff Martin

World Youth Radial Championships

205 youth males split into three fleets and 70 youth females sailing as one fleet followed the men and women at Scheveningen, Holland.

After a long wait for the wind there were further delays on the first day as the fleets took a lot of time to get used to the strong current that was under them at the start in light winds. 17 sailors in the youth female fleet and 41 male youth were disqualified for early starts under the black flag rule. Thorbjørn Schierup (DEN), Antoine Coadou (FRA), David Jessop (GBR) and Anna Haeger (USA) were the race winners in the only race of the day.

Unfortunately the wind did not arrive as forecast for the second day. The fleets were held ashore for 6 hours until a 12 knot wind arrived enabling 2 races to be completed. In the male fleets the results were more consistent than the female over the first 3 races. Schierup was the most consistent scoring an 8th and then another 1st to give him the overall lead as the wind increased to 15 knots. Like Schierup Haeger also scored her second bullet in the second race of the day. However, her 29th place in her first race of the day meant that she had to share her lead with Tuula Tenkanen (FIN).

A steady, on shore northerly air stream of 16 knots and good surfing waves across the course area greeted sailors on Day 3. Annalise Murphy (IRE) made the best of the conditions to lead Cushla Hume-Merry (NZL) home in the first race giving them both their best result of the Championship so far. Female Championship leader Tenkanen was on fire in the 2nd race going from 8th at the first mark to win by the biggest margin in any fleet. Overnight leader, Anne Haeger, held on to her shared lead with a consistent 8th and 9th dropping her worst result. In spite of scoring the best result of the day with a 4th in the first race to go with her win, Tenkanen dropped to third 3 points behind the new joint leader, Susana Romero Steensma (ESP).

The best result of Day 3 went to the most consistent sailor in the championship, Schierup. His two first places helped him extend his overall lead over Alex Mills-Barton (GBR) and Iannis Mitakis (GRE).

Day 4 saw a 26 knot Northerly wind and 2m waves keep sailors ashore for the day.

On Day 5 the sailors were greeted with a 20 knot northerly wind and challenging waves. Three races were completed with the male fleet split into gold, silver and bronze. Schierup was once again the best sailor on the course, starting conservatively in each race he worked his way through the fleet to win the first and third races

to go with a 3rd in the middle race.

Racing was close between Susana Romero Steensma, Mathilde de Kerangat (FRA), Sabine Isambert (FRA), Chloe Martin (GBR) and Hume-Merry in the first female race. Hume-Merry and Steensma both improved in the last third of the race to finish first and second. In the second race Sarah Gunni (DEN) had established a big lead by the 2nd upwind and held it until the finish with Tenkanen filling the runner up position. Anne Haeger, could only manage a 14th and 17th.

In the third race De Kerangat scored her first win of the series after an exciting battle with Gunni. Tenkanen was hit by a port tack boat at the first mark. The collision resulted in a large hole in the Finnish boat and she had to retire. The international jury gave her redress and she finished the day 5.6 pts behind the new overall leader Steensma who finished 7th in the last race of the day.

Once again there was drama in the female fleet on the final day. Steensma threw caution to the wind in an effort to get a good start and was over the line with the black flag being flown and could not participate in the restart. This meant that Tenkanen had to win to take the title. She gave it her best shot but finished second to Tiffany Brian (IRL). On coming ashore Brian was subsequently disqualified for touching a downwind mark leaving Tenkanen the race winner and Female Youth World Radial Champion by .4 of a point! She commented: "It feels really good. I thought I had a good chance but it was really tough".

In the male gold fleet, Schierup struggled in the lighter winds and scored his worst result of the series, 13th place. All top 4 sailors scored worse than 22nd making Schierup the Male Youth World Radial Champion. After the race he commented: "Today was not my day as I prefer stronger wind and waves. I am very tired but it feels great".

Final Results

Youth Radial Female

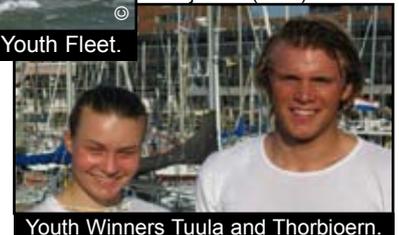
1. Tuula Tenkanen (FIN)
2. Susana Romero Steensma (ESP)
3. Sarah Gunni (DEN)

Youth Radial Male

1. Thorbjørn Schierup (DEN)
2. Iannis Mitakis (GRE)
3. Gijs Pelt (NED)



The Youth Fleet.



Youth Winners Tuula and Thorbjørn.

ISAF World Championships Continued from Page 1...

Behind her, Nieman, in fifth, hit the 2nd windward mark and dropped to last after doing her penalty turn.

On the second lap Xu dropped from second when her mainsheet tied itself in a knot and Nufar Edelman (ISR) was given a jury penalty after she had already completed a penalty for also hitting the mark

Meanwhile, Sari Multala (FIN) had moved up to second ahead of Tatiana Drozdovskaya (BLR). Drozdovskaya went left on the last windward leg and got ahead of Multala by a boat length at the third windward mark. Whoever finished second out of these two would take the title. At the line Drozdovskaya

was a metre ahead and became the first Belarussian World Champion in any sport since the country became independent.

Final Results Laser Standard

1. SLINGSBY, Tom AUS - 43pts
2. MURDOCH, Andrew NZL - 52pts
3. KAPPAK, Dennis EST - 55pts
4. ARAPOV, Mate CRO - 61pts
5. GOODISON, Paul GBR - 62pts

Laser Radial

1. DROZDOVSKAYA, Tatiana BLR - 47pts
2. MULTALA, Sari FIN - 50pts
3. NIEMANN, Petra GER - 51pts
4. SZOTYNSKA, Katarzyna POL - 55pts
5. TUNNICLIFFE, Anna USA - 55pts

Protecting the One Design Principle

We asked Class President, Heini Wellmann, to give us an overview of the tools we have to protect the One Design Principle.



© Thom Touw

The one design principle is the most important asset of the Laser Class. Its protection is therefore a prime concern for the Class. A number of legal instruments are in place to assure that protection. The most important ones are the Laser Construction Manual (LCM) and the Class Rules.

The LCM is a proprietary, protected document that specifies the manufacturing procedures, standard plugs and tools as well as the raw materials and parts supplied by third parties for the hull, sails and spars. Periodic factory inspections by the Class make sure that the manual is strictly adhered to by the builders. These factory inspections are the "measurements" in the traditional sense of sailing.

The Class Rules specify that nothing can be changed by a sailor on the hull, sail and spars except what is specifically and positively allowed in the Rules. At major Laser regattas, there is no measurement in the traditional sense. Instead, a simple inspection is made to make sure that only original parts are used and that the boat is rigged according to the Rules.

In this issue of the LaserWorld the LCM is considered in detail and in the next issue I will deal with the Rules and the inspections at regattas.

The one design principle means that all Lasers – that are produced by the licensed builders – are the same. There should be no differences in performance, quality and fittings used between the different manufacturers. The LCM is the instrument to assure this. It defines in detail the manufacturing procedures, the materials used and the quality assurance procedures mandatory for each builder.

Any change in the LCM requires the unanimous approval by all licensed builders, the International Laser Class Association and ISAF. During the last two years the builders together with the Technical Officer of the Class, Adam French, have undertaken a tremendous effort to revise the LCM. Wherever possible tolerances were reduced, more detailed descriptions were added and the whole manual was put into a properly secured electronic form. The LCM is continuously reviewed as part of an ongoing process to further tighten tolerances and specifications where possible. During the revision of the LCM much

thought was given to the basic principles on how the Laser should evolve. The following principles were approved by all Builders and the Class and are now part of the LCM:

· Evolution in quality and ease of use:

The Builders have made and will continue to make a sustained effort to improve the quality, durability and ease of use of the Laser – but without changing its basic performance. Where tolerances exist in the Quality Assurance procedures for incoming materials and for the manufacturing process, a continued effort will be made to reduce them, but avoiding significant cost increases.

· The concept of a "lead builder":

For each project a "Lead Builder" will be nominated, who will report periodically to the other Builders and ILCA. Changes can only be introduced – after the appropriate testing – with the approval of all of the parties concerned.

· Availability of options in materials and fittings:

If the LCM or the Rules allow options in the fittings, boat parts and material used, then all options must be made available worldwide at the same time and at comparable prices.

· Evolution of the Laser:

Allow only for changes that are not too expensive, do not affect the performance of the boat and can be easily fitted by a sailor without professional help.

Parts or fittings that have been produced in compliance with the LCM and are therefore Class Legal cannot be subsequently made illegal, but restrictions on the use of particular equipment (in the interest of minimising differences) may be made.

Finally, the control of the adherence to the LCM is governed by the Laser Construction Manual Agreement signed by the before mentioned parties. It defines the procedures for the periodic factory inspections by the Class and the measures necessary in case of deviations. This agreement is the most important legal document, which holds the whole "Laser one design system" together.

I hope that these lines assure you that the Builders and the Class are determined to protect the one design principle of the Laser the best they can.



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Quick Questions Evi Van Acker

European Radial Champion 2007

What's the best sailing tip you've ever been given?

Sail with a smile! Fight for every metre! Stay focused in tough moments.

Favourite place in the world to sail?

Cabarete, Dominican Republic.

What's your best fitness tip?

Start a race well rested.

Any superstitions before a race?

Plenty! Taking my rubber ducky in my lifejacket!

Who's your all time sporting hero?

Robert Sheidt.

Favourite food / drink?

Sushi, Italian or Ice cream.

Wine or Mojitos.

Favourite film?

Meet the Fockers. Ha Ha.

What inspires you?

My father. My love for sailing and competition.

Which sailors do you think will be big in 2008?

I hope I will be!

What's the biggest mistake you've ever made when racing?

Not sticking to my original plan.

What's been your biggest sailing success?

Winning Palma 06/07, Hyeres 07, Holland Regatta 06/07 and Europeans 06 and 07.

Strong current at Radial Worlds and Europeans

The first day of racing at the World Men's Radial and European Women's Radial Championships began with the forecast of strong wind and rain. The weather in Scheveningen, Holland, continued to be changeable throughout the regatta leading to long waits on and off the water for most sailors.

Defending European Women's Champion, Evi van Acker, started well with a 1st and a 3rd on day 1, making her the overnight leader in the women's fleet. The Dutch men also had a good start with four Dutch sailors in the top five positions. Douwe Boekens and Eduardo van Vianen shared the lead.

Day 2 saw the wind strengthen overnight, causing a 3m swell that led to the racing being postponed for the day.

The third day was a complete contrast with not enough wind. The first of the men's fleets continuously pushed the line in spite of the black flag being flown. After 16 boats were disqualified the fleet finally got away on the 4th attempt. The men's leader, Douwe Boekens from Holland, said before the race: "I was fast in the strong winds of the first day but it could be a different story if the wind goes light". His fears were well founded as he finished 15th in his fleet. "I had a disaster" he said afterwards. Van Vianen took sole control of the overall lead with a fifth place in the only race of the day sailed in 10 knots. Van Acker maintained her overall lead winning the only race of the day. A second race was attempted but abandoned as the wind died and the current took over.

After a four hour wait afloat, competitors were rewarded with an unexpected 9 knot sea breeze on the fourth day at the time of slack tide. Van Acker (BEL) led home Gintare Volungeviciute (LTU) by a massive 54 seconds following a poor start at the pin

end. Van Vianen also held on to his lead with an eighth position when his nearest rivals scored badly. Once again the second race of the day was lost. The sea breeze died to be immediately replaced by the gradient wind from the opposite direction turning the course inside out.

On day 5 the fleets were split into gold and silver. Strong currents caused problems in the 9 to 11 knot breeze and a number of the women misjudged the top mark, van Acker and 2nd placed Volungeviciute both approached the mark on port and got trapped by the starboard tack boats being swept onto the mark. Van Acker fouled another boat and hit the mark. By the time she had done the 3 turns she was back in the late twenties and found it impossible to make progress through the fleet. She and Volungeviciute both scored their worst results of the series. Van Acker sailed a conservative second race to finish fifth. The challenge from Volungeviciute fell apart after she had to retire from the second race while leading after being given a second yellow flag from the jury. Van Vianen looked solid in the men's fleet after leading home second overall, Ben Paton (GBR) in the first race of the day. In his second race he said: "I had a reasonable start but failed to clear my wind". His coach felt he stayed in the stronger current for too long. The net result of his mistakes was that he finished 38th whilst Paton finished 1st to take the overall lead.

Van Acker led the women by 22 points going into the final day. She comfortably managed to defend her title with a 1st and 7th place putting on a display of magnificent sailing to justify her 19 point lead over 2nd place Sarah Steyaert and 3rd place Alberte Lindberg. She said after the race: "The World Championships in Portugal were really disappointing for me, I have won everything this year but before the Worlds

I had so many injuries and everything just went wrong. It's good to be back and it's good to win, it has given me confidence for the next regatta".

It was a close call until the very end in the men's fleet. Paton had a disappointing 26th in the first race but fortunately for Paton van Vianen could only manage a 17th. With many complicated permutations, Paton had to finish 13th or better to win his first title. He had a bad first leg and then had to climb through the field in the knowledge that van Vianen was well in front of him. He left to the last leg to get to what for him was a lucky 13th to give him the title by two points from van Vianen who finished second in the final race. When congratulated Ben said: "It's still a bit of a shock at the moment. Having not been big enough to sail the Laser Standard and aim for the Olympics, winning the World Championship is as high as I can get. It's just a dream".

- Final Results:**
World Men's Radial
 1. Ben Paton (GBR)
 2. Eduardo van Vianen (NED)
 3. Steven Krol (NED)
European Women's Radial
 1. Evi van Acker (BEL)
 2. Sarah Steyaert (FRA)
 3. Alberte Lindberg (DEN)



Evi Van Acker and Ben Paton.

Pre Olympic Regatta, Qingdao, China

The 2007 Olympic test event kept its promises with all of the top sailors in attendance. The limit of one place per nation in each category forced some of the national authorities to make crucial choices. The weather conditions consisted of mostly light wind of around five knots with the exception of the last day of fleet racing when the wind picked up to around 18 knots



Paul Goodison celebrates gold in Qingdao.

and in the medal race with wind speeds around 12 knots.

The main difficulties for the sailors were the strong currents and the difficult choice of tack as the laser fleets were sailing close to the shore.

In the Radial fleet, recently crowned European Radial Champion, Evi van Acker had the best start and was the first overnight leader. Over the next few days Jo Aleh (NZL) took over the lead until Anna Tunnicliffe (USA) scored 3 successive wins and a 2nd place to lead Aleh going into the medal race. Tunnicliffe engaged Aleh in a ferocious tacking duel on the first leg which was enough to slow Aleh to a point where Tunnicliffe could keep the number 1 position.

In the Standard fleet, Paul Goodison (GBR), who had lost 7 kilos for the

Olympic test event, led the event from the beginning. He went into the final race 5 points ahead of Rasmus Myrgren (SWE). Myrgren had to finish 3 places ahead of Goodison to win overall.

He was in the gold medal position until the last leg of the race after Goodison had a poor start. Going round the last mark Myrgren was 6th to Goodison's 8th. Myrgren squeezed passed Andrew Murdoch (NZL) to finish in 5th by six seconds challenging Goodison to get to 7th. Goodison took up the challenge and passed Maciej Grabowski (POL) to finish 7th and take the gold by 3 seconds.

No doubt the Beijing Olympics will be a battle until the final hour if the expected light winds materialise.

- Final Results**
Standard
 1. Paul Goodison GBR
 2. Rasmus Myrgren SWE
 3. Maciej Grabowski POL
Radial
 1. Anna Tunnicliffe USA
 2. Jo Aleh NZL
 3. Evi van Acker BEL



Radial winner Anna Tunnicliffe.

Ever wondered how it feels to be ISAF World Champion? We talk to Tatiana Drozdovskaya and Tom Slingsby.

Tatiana Drozdovskaya....

Congratulations! How does it feel to be ISAF World Champion?

Thank you very much. I am very, very happy that one of my dreams has come true. All my life I dreamt of winning the European and World Championships. Of course my other dream is to win at the Olympic games.

What was the key to your success?

I was trying to make the minimum mistakes possible but it took a lot of concentration. I was just thinking I needed to do well to qualify Belarus for the Olympics. I didn't think I would win!

Overall you had quite a consistent series with only two bad races. Were you confident after the split into gold and silver fleets?

Yes. The first finals day was very hard. The wind was gusty but I was really lucky - I was in the right place at the right time. I was also nervous as in two of the races I rounded the first mark in 2nd and 4th, but only managed to finish in 6th and 10th. Overall, it was a very challenging Championship for all of the competitors.

You are the first Belarusian World Champion since your country's independence. How did it feel to be congratulated by the Belarusian President?

I was very happy, it was very emotional. I was still in Portugal after the regatta and my coach told me I had received a telegram from the president. I didn't believe him until I went to the race office. I felt so emotional when I read the telegram, I had butterflies in my stomach. Later when we returned to the yacht club in Belarus we were met by lots of people, my friends and the national press. It was very exciting.

You must be becoming an inspiration for young people in Belarus. How did you first get into sailing?

I have been sailing since the age of fifteen. I didn't think of sailing as my favourite sport but

I wanted to take part and succeed in all sports. My coach, Sergey Morozov, really helped me with my training and I am very thankful to him for staying with me for all this time.

Is sailing a popular sport in Belarus?

Not many people actually know about sailing in Belarus.

Before the championship I would tell people that I am a sailor and they would ask what sailing is! I hope this will change.

Do you have a favourite place to sail in Belarus?

My favourite place is the beautiful Lake Naroch. It is about 250km from my home in Minsk and I used to train there. It's a beautiful lake with great waves and good wind. I now train in the Minsk Sea, my local lake.

What do you do in your free time when you're not sailing?

All the free time I have is spent with my baby, Nikolai. Unfortunately I cannot take him with me to competitions so whenever I am home I spend time with him.

A problem with your Visa stopped you getting to the European Women's Radial Championships. Was this an important event for you? Which other events will you be attending?

Yes, the European Championship was just as important as the World Championships to me and I was very upset that I wasn't able to go to the Netherlands. At the beginning of August I will be going to the Pre-Olympic Regatta in China, then afterwards to the National Championships in Belarus.

I would tell people that I am a sailor and they would ask: "What is sailing!"



Tatiana sailing to victory.

With the Radial World Championships and the Olympics in Beijing, 2008 looks like a busy and challenging year. What are your main thoughts for your training in the run up to these events?

I will be training very hard, now that I am the World Champion I want to protect my title. I hope to be training together with some of the other strong female sailors such as Anna Tunnicliffe, Tania Elias and maybe the French team. We will be going to a warmer climate, as the temperatures are low in November in Belarus.

In 2000 and 2004 you finished in 20th and 24th in the Olympics. What are your expectations for Beijing?

I don't want to jinx myself by talking about it too much! I hope I don't repeat those scores and wish I could take the last digit off of the previous results!

How will you prepare mentally for 2008?

My main aim is to stay relaxed. I will try not to think about the results but just stay calm and concentrate on the race.

We wish you the best of luck in 2008!

Tom Slingsby....

Congratulations! Talk us through your performance in the medal race.

I didn't do too well to the top mark and knew that my competitors were right up there in the top couple of boats so it was pretty stressful, I pulled back some places and luckily got back to 6th.



Gold in Cascais for Tom Slingsby.

What was the key to your success?

I'm not too sure, it was very challenging conditions out there, you couldn't afford to take too big a risk. If you sailed too far to one side or the other you would end up first or last. I played a better percentage game than the other sailors and didn't end up with too many large scores, I think I was just more consistent.

How does it feel to be the Laser World Champion?

Awesome, to come so close last year, leading for 7 days and losing on the 8th day. This year it was definitely going through my head. It's such a relief to win the World Championship and

hopefully I can win more in the future.

What did you do differently?

Experience is the biggest difference, last year I was new to the pressure of the medal race. This year I had learnt from my mistakes and knew how to handle it.

In the ISAF Worlds you sailed on five different course areas. How did you find that as opposed to sailing on the same race area all the time?

It was definitely more challenging, on the same course area you quickly work out the trends. But here you had to learn new conditions every day, it's a lot more challenging but probably a lot better as well.

So what are your plans between now and Beijing?

Hopefully I'll get selected for the Olympics. I have had a few good light wind events already this year which hopefully will continue on into China in August. Next year I will be following the same programme, competing at every event.

You must now have a pretty good chance of getting the Australian selection for the Olympics?

I'm not too sure; it will go to a nomination panel. Winning the World Championship will definitely help. At the end of the day I guess they are looking for the best light wind sailor and a good medal hope in China. It's definitely not 100% yet.

Are you looking forward to the next World Championships on your home waters?

Definitely, Terrigal is a great sailing spot and I am sure we'll put on a great event. Hopefully everyone will enjoy it.

Congratulations Tom, well done.

The Laser's My Other Boat

Article by Gary Jobson

I've sailed many boats, both casually and competitively, big and small, but the Laser is the only boat I've always considered to be "my other boat." Over the past four decades, it's been my one constant; it's always kept at the ready, hanging in the garage. My Laser career actually got off to a rocky start. In 1970, the Laser's designer, Bruce Kirby, gave a lecture at the New York Maritime College. After the talk he invited me to Rowayton, Conn., to try out a new dinghy he had designed. At the time, it was known as the Weekender, but it was renamed the Laser, after a new technology that would provide huge scientific advances.

A few days later, I found my way to Rowayton and launched Kirby's flat-decked dinghy off the float. The boat had the number 100 on the sail, which designated that it was the first one built. My 6-foot 2-inch, 180-pound frame seemed to fit the boat perfectly, and how fast I could get it to go was directly related to how hard I hiked. Handling the mainsheet and tiller simultaneously was a little tricky at first, but the boat was simple and fast, and gave me a sensation I'd never before felt on a dinghy. I could have sailed it all day long.

On the way back to the dock I could see a stake in the water with an arrow on it; I couldn't decide whether the arrow pointed toward a rock or a channel. As it turned out, it was warning me about a rock, but I went inside the stake and promptly ran aground, taking a chunk out of the Weekender's centerboard.

Kirby wasn't worried at all about the bruised centerboard. He really wanted to know how I liked the boat. "It's great," I told him. If he asked me the same question now, 37 years later, I'd give him the exact same answer.

Thinking back to that first sail helps me recall a few memorable moments in the boat. One of my favorites was in the summer of 1972. That year I qualified for the O'Day Singlehanded Championships

by winning the College Nationals. The O'Day was sailed out of the Richmond YC on San Francisco Bay on the infamous Berkeley Circle. The afternoon thermal winds blew hard at 30 knots or more and I will never forget one incident during a race when all 16 boats were screaming toward the reach mark. Jibing seemed out of the question, but tacking to round the mark was an absurd alternative. At that moment, I was in third place and went for the jibe.

The vang was too tight and after it whipped across, the end of the boom caught the water and I promptly capsized. I remember being incredibly upset, but then I noticed that every other boat in the fleet had also capsized. This race would be won by the guy who could right his boat the fastest.

In the middle of the mess, Craig Thomas, a Seattle sailor, finally arrived at the mark, having capsized earlier, and shouted to all of us in the water. "I'll show you how to do it!" And with that bit of bravado he pitch-poled. It was classic. We all cheered! A few years later, the first official Laser World Championship was to be held in Bermuda; there were 120 spots available to those who qualified. That year, in August, I was one of 188 competitors that descended on the Royal Canadian YC in Toronto for the North Americans; from here the top four would go to the Worlds. The competition was intense and the series came down to the last race with 10 of us mathematically in the running for one of the coveted four spots.

During the pre-race tune-up I noticed that boats coming out of the port side of the course were always gaining and crossing ahead of the boats on starboard. I figured out that a strange wave pattern made steering difficult on starboard tack. About three minutes before the start, I

broke away from most of the fleet that was clearly manoeuvring to start near the starboard end. At the gun, I flipped over to port tack and crossed the entire fleet by six lengths. It was one of the most thrilling moments in my sailing career. I went on to Bermuda and finished 11th. Peter Commette won the event.

And speaking of Commette, I'll never forget one early regatta on Barnegat Bay, when Commette, young at the time, tacked under my lee bow. I worked hard and was able to roll over the top of him. Many years later he told me the incident still bothered him. I'm glad it wasn't the other way around. But that's the beauty of the Laser—it truly rewards effort. The harder you sail, the flatter you keep the boat, the faster you go. Half-hearted hiking just isn't enough.

"I'll show you how to do it!"
And with that bit of bravado he pitch-poled. It was classic.
We all cheered!

The Laser has given me many moments that still make me smile with satisfaction. At one of my early Laser regattas, I remember watching Art Ellis, a Princeton football player, unload his Laser, put it on his shoulder, and carry the boat down to the beach while smoking a pipe. It was an intimidating act. Ellis won that day in heavy wind.

There was one regatta where all the boats were provided, and one competitor took every centerboard out of its box to see which one fit his centerboard trunk best. It was an audacious move. When he found the board he liked best he wrote his name on the side and left it in the boat. The following day, all the sailors arrived at the beach where the boats were sitting; every boat had a centerboard in the trunk with the name of the guy who had written his name on every board in the fleet. I bet he got the point.

I recently entered a Laser Master's Regatta — I'm a Grand Master. It had been a few years since I last raced and I learned that there are many new, cool ways to rig the boat. I picked up a tuning guide to help me figure it all out. With my boat on the dolly, I laid out the printed instructions before me and started leading the lines through the assorted blocks. I noticed a competitor video recording my procedure. I asked him, "What are you up to?" "I just thought it would be fun to show my fleet how you need instructions to rig a Laser," he replied. Ouch!

No matter where you sail there is likely a Laser fleet nearby. Many of the competitors don't sail any boat other than a Laser, but they are very competitive. Today I enjoy day sailing my Laser as much as racing it. When I push away from the dock and trim in that main I still get the same thrill I experienced when Kirby let me take his Weekender for a spin. Leaning out against the hiking straps gives me a sense of power, strength, and freedom. Lasers are forever.



© Gary Jobson

Jobson many years ago.

Note the old tiller, vang and cunningham.

Victory for Croatia at European 4.7's

Article by Ron Hutchieson

262 competitors from 25 nations paraded behind their countries' flags on the East Pier of the National Yacht Club, Dun Laoghaire, in the opening ceremony of the European 4.7 Championship. The Championship was officially opened by Goran Petersson, President of ISAF, with a number of Irish Ambassadors and Government Ministers.

Racing started with light variable winds which increased to 10 - 15 knots of wind and torrential rain. On the second day, however, the fleet was met with sunshine, blue skies and a nice breeze.

The Italians were setting the pace in the female fleet when Serena De Luca won race four and held the overnight lead.

The male overnight leader, Yan Chekh (RUS), retained his position at the top of the table despite his lowest place finish in the series in race 6. Ashore at the National Yacht Club he commented: "I think this championship is fantastic. We are getting such good experience. I come from the Black Sea where the weather can be the same for weeks, here we are getting different weather in every race!"

Croatia's Tajana Ganic enjoyed the heavy conditions and with two race wins she moved up in the overall rankings. However, it was 17 year old Serena de Luca (ITA) who still held the overall lead in the female fleet.

At the end of the qualifiers the male fleet was split into Gold, Silver and Bronze for the last two days of the event.

Katie Tingle was thrilled to be the first Irish race winner in this championship – no mean achievement considering her lack of experience in Laser 4.7s; she is currently the Female 420 Irish National Champion.

By day 5 it could not have been closer at the top of the female fleet. With two discards now counted, Tajana Ganic and her compatriot Lina Stock were both level on 61 points. Meanwhile, Serena De Luca slipped into 5th place as a result of finishing in 25th in race 8.

Since the beginning of the championship Russia's Yan Chekh had been leading the male fleet and with a clear 19 point lead should be comfortable going into the final two races although scoring a 29th in race 10. But anything could have happened on the final day with Alexios Katsios (GRE) in second, just two points ahead of Marko Peresa (CRO).

A marvellous European Laser 4.7 Championship ended with thrilling final races in both the male and female fleets, with gusts peaking at 30 knots.

Tajana Ganic lifted the ladies crown scoring a 5th place after starting the final race just a single point ahead of her rival Michelle Broekhuizen (NED). The 17 year old was overjoyed with her win and said: "For me it is a dream come true. It has been a great championship".

16 year old Alexios Katsios sailed a thrilling final day to beat long term leader Yan Chekh (who was black flagged in race 11), thereby becoming the European Youth Laser 4.7 Champion. Alexios joked: "I have heard many stories about the Irish weather but did not believe that all four seasons occur every day".

The prize-giving ceremony took place in sunshine and Con Murphy, Commodore of the National Yacht Club, commented: "It has been a tremendous event and one the club will fondly remember. The racing programme ran like clockwork and we got a great variety of weather conditions which gave the competitors a week of superb racing. Our visitors will go home with fond memories of their visit to Ireland."

Final Results:

Female Fleet

1. Tajana Ganic (CRO)
2. Michelle Broekhuizen (NED)
3. Antea Kordic (CRO)
4. Serena de Luca (ITA)
5. Lina Stock (CRO)

Male Fleet

1. Alexios Katsios (GRE)
2. Marko Peresa (CRO)
3. Yan Chekh (RUS)
4. Albert Zahtila (CRO)
5. Yuri Hummel (NED)

Newcomers to the Laser Class, The Cook Islands, in training for 2008!

A group of Cook Islanders sailed their way into the hearts of the professional sailing scene in New Zealand recently when Taula Elisa, Helema William and Junior Charlie attended a Sailing Cook Islands high performance training and competition program at a sailing school in New Zealand run by renowned coach Rob Coutts.

The Coutts Sailing School program was very detailed and included briefings on tactics, skills, competition, light and heavy weather sailing, tacking, jibing and advanced techniques at starts, rounding marks and defensive tactics. On the water training was accompanied by video taping of the sailors and classroom analysis of their techniques and tactics.

During the 6 weeks of training the team competed in four major events and are now planning to hold 4.7 introductory sessions for other local sailors later this year.



Irish weather challenges the 4.7 sailors.

© Graham Gosling

Laser sailors battle the drought and winter chills in Southern Australia

Article by Peter Muirhead



Braving the chills at Goolwa Frostbite.

© Steph Coulter

In their quest for improvement Laser sailors in South Australia are increasingly spending more time on the water during the traditional off-season, taking advantage of the relatively mild southern hemisphere winter. This program is being built around one event with a long winter tradition known as the Frostbite Regatta.

For 25 years it has been held at Goolwa on the Lower Murray and is conducted by the South Australian Laser Association in conjunction with the Goolwa Regatta Yacht Club.

The venue is only a few kilometers from where Australia's largest river, the Murray, finally empties into the Southern Ocean. The thing about Goolwa is that what ever Mother Nature dishes up (and certainly it can be bitterly cold and windy) racing can go ahead when it would not be possible elsewhere.

This year however, it was a lack of water due to widespread and prolonged drought, rather than too much wind that almost led to the event being called off for the first time ever.

The light and shifty conditions allowed for close racing, with plenty of competitors having time at the front.

Standard Rig Results:

1. Nick Fewster, 2. Ben Taylor, 3. Todd Hughes

Radial Rig Results:

1. Matt Sanderson, 2. Taison Eady, 3. Darryl Brooksby

Laser World Record - Sailing Across the Gulf

Article by Julie Holland

Bahraini Laser sailor, 23 year old Sami Kooheji, sailed into the World Record books in May 2007 when he sailed a Laser Standard across the Arabian Gulf. The event was the 2007 Air Arabia World Endurance Sailing Challenge and Sami sailed non-stop from Bahrain to Dubai in the UAE.

This was the first time in the world anyone had attempted such a feat of endurance in a small sailing boat. Sami covered a distance of more than 550 kms non-stop, in a time of 64 hours 50 minutes and 9 seconds.

He had two support boats with him during the endurance sailing challenge, at no time did Sami leave his Laser nor did the support boats interfere with his progress by coming in too close.

This was the second endurance test for Sami who competed in the 2004 Olympic Games and is a commercial airline pilot with Air Arabia. He also attained a world record in 2004 when he circumnavigated the island of Bahrain in a Laser in a non-stop time of 27 hours, 1 minute and 22 seconds.

Speaking afterwards, Sami said this sailing challenge had been much tougher than he expected. He set off from the Bahrain Yacht Club at 17.31 in the evening, however, during the night a freak wind picked up, maintaining 26-32 knots and it stayed that way until sunrise. In re-living the ordeal he said that compared to daylight sailing he found sailing at night very hard indeed, there was no moonlight, they were far away from land and it was not safe to stop as the waves were swamping the boats - all they could do was persevere and hope the wind would die down a little.

Once morning broke Sami's luck changed and the wind calmed down to 5-10 knots although the waves were still very big and the temperature soon rose to a scorching 45 degrees celsius.

The wind picked up and settled at 10 knots

throughout the second night at sea and although the sailing was smoother, lack of sleep and the complete darkness started to have its effect and he found himself becoming very disorientated - "there was no distinction between the sky and the sea, it was like sailing into a big black hole", Sami later recalled.

Fortunately once the sun came up so his energy returned and the wind suddenly picked up again to 20-25 knots and maintained this throughout the whole day and best of all it was blowing in the perfect direction. The sailing was now fast and fun!

The final night at sea was once again tough for Sami. As he got closer to Dubai he found himself sailing through busy shipping lanes with the waves as high as ever. He was suffering with cramps, sun-burn, salt burns and was understandably extremely fatigued, having managed only 2 hours sleep throughout the challenge up to this point.

Sami managed to complete his epic journey, landing at the beautiful beach alongside the Burj Al Arab Hotel to a momentous welcome from his family, friends and a host of reporters from the media who had been following his progress with great interest. On arriving to this hero's welcome Sami said the feeling he got when crossing the finish line was incredible and the support of everyone had been absolutely fantastic. Although weak and walking was difficult Sami was very pleased to be back on dry land again. During the press conference that followed Sami said how grateful he was to his support team - their constant support and encouragement had played a huge part in the success of the challenge.

Sami's achievement also benefited a local charity 'The Bahrain Palm Association' which helps families in need. He was able to make a donation to the charity of \$3000 and also hopes that through this event that sailing will be promoted within the Middle East.



Arriving in Burj, Dubai.

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Flying the Finishing Flags.

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Largest ever Australian Nationals?

The 2008 Australian Laser Championships are shaping up to be the largest Laser event ever conducted in Australia and possibly in the southern hemisphere.

Being an open event in an Olympic year, with the 2008 World Laser Senior and World Laser Masters Championships being held the following month in Terrigal, north of Sydney, it is expected all international teams will be represented.

The event is also a selection series for Australians to qualify for entry to the World Championships. An almighty battle between Michael Blackburn and Tom Slingsby is awaited with much anticipation. Of course rivalry for the famous "battens" trophy - awarded to the best performing Australian State will be as strong as ever.

To be held from 27 December 07 - 4 January 08 at the Blairgowrie Yacht Squadron on the beautiful Mornington Peninsula, Victoria, 1

hours drive south of Melbourne the event is expected to offer summer sailing off a sandy beach with intense competition and great social interaction.

Event web site:
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