

2014 ISAF Youth Match Racing World Championship

A final report from the ISAF Technical Delegate

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The inaugural ISAF Youth Match Racing World Championship was held in Helsinki, FIN between 23 to 27 July 2014.
- 1.2 The event was first created by Council in November 2012 at the request of the Match Racing Committee. The first edition of the event was awarded to Finland following a bidding process in Autumn 2013 (the other bid was from Australia).
- 1.3 The policy direction for the event is overseen by the Match Racing Committee and its Youth Match Racing Working Party.

2. Teams

- 2.1 The age limit for the event is to be under 23 years old on the 31 December of the year of competition.
- 2.2 The capacity of the event was set at 16 teams. One place was offered to the Host MNA (the Finnish Boating and Sailing Federation) and the remaining places were available to MNAs to ask for. If after 30 April places remained, ISAF would consider wildcard spaces.
- 2.3 By the 30 April deadline, the event was full with MNA entries and so wildcards were not required. Closer to the event, one team had to withdraw following discovery their skipper was not eligible under the age rules. The decision of the Working Party was to not fill the space with a wildcard as (i) there were concerns the format was suffering due to the size of the event and number of boats available and (ii) a wildcard would have meant two entries from one MNA and it was felt the principle of 'one MNA, one entry' was important.
- 2.4 The final list of teams was: AUS, DEN, GBR, GER, FIN, FRA, IRL, ITA, ISV, NZL, POL, RUS, SUI, SWE, USA.

3. Officials

- 3.1 ISAF appointed the ISAF Course Representative (Antonio DE LE MADRID IRO (ESP)), the Chief Umpire (Alan BASER IU (GBR)) and seven other International Umpires.
- 3.2 All the ISAF race officials performed well and at the standard expected of them.
- 3.3 The importance of appointing an ISAF Course Representative was made clear at this event. Race management of match racing at Grade W or 1 level is a specific skilled discipline. Local race officers, even with some match racing experience, often do not have the experience to run the racing at the required level. It is important that ISAF resists attempts by organisers to not have a Course Representative as this then means the Technical Delegate is left to supervise the race management much more than is proper for the role.

4. Equipment

- 4.1 The boats used for the Championships were J/80s sailed with a crew of 4 or 5. 7 boats were available throughout the event.
- 4.2 The number of breakdown flags and breakdowns was low due the light winds and there was a good support service on the water. There was no major damage to any of the boats.
- 4.3 The number of boats available was an issue. For an event of this size, 8 boats should be provided (and ideally with another spare, but a fleet of 9 would be rare). If a fleet of 8 cannot be used, then the size of the event should be reconsidered (see section 6 below on Format).

5. Documentation

All documentation used at the event complied with ISAF standards.

6. Course and Format

- 6.1 The racing areas was in Helsinki harbour. The area was approximately 25 minutes sail from the venue and not within view of spectators. The area was large enough to hold racing, but the presence of shipping lanes presented course limit challenges for the race management team when wind shifts occurred.
- 6.2 The wind conditions were sufficient for racing – winds were usually light but on a couple of days the sea breeze strengthened to around 10 – 11 knots. The ISAF Race Management Policies for Match Racing were followed consistently and racing was postponed when conditions became unfair.
- 6.3 The format of racing was a round robin, followed by knockout quarter-finals, semi-finals and finals. The format presented significant challenges, particularly given the light conditions. A round robin for 15 teams involved a full three days of racing at 13 flights per day. This meant much longer days on the water than were desirable and had the wind been any less then the format would not have been fully completed. A round robin was the fairest method of qualifying with 15 teams, but 15 teams in 6 boats was at the very limit of what the event could cope with.
- 6.4 The quarter finals were completed in time and the semi-finals were completed, but only because they each went 3-0. The final went up against the cut-off time but was completed.
- 6.5 There is a view that by finishing qualifying on Day 3 of 5, seven teams were finished racing early and this is not desirable. This was a function of the format – there was no other way to have 'consolation racing' with the limited resources of boats and time available. As to the future format, ISAF needs to make a policy decision on this area.

7. Media

Media coverage was good for the level of the event. The organisers worked well with the ISAF Communications Department and followed all the requirements sent to them in advance of the event. Photography and written material from the organisers was sound and there was good pick up in sailing specific media platforms. Unfortunately there was no video coverage or highlights.

8. Ceremonies

The opening ceremony was held at the venue and speeches were made by ISAF Vice President Adrienne GREENWOOD, the Commodore of the Host Club and Peter TALLBERG, former ISAF President and IOC Member. Adrienne Greenwood and the Commodore also spoke at the closing ceremony.

9. Results

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| 1) Joachim ASCHENBRENNER (DEN) | 8) Tyler RICE (ISV) |
| 2) Sam GILMOUR (AUS) | 9) Markus RONNBERG(FIN) |
| 3) Nevin SNOW (USA) | 10) Nelson METTRAUX (SUI) |
| 4) PierreQUIROGA (FRA) | 11) Philip BENDON (IRL) |
| 5) Mark LEES (GBR) | 12) Jakob KLITTE (SWE) |
| 6) Valerio GALATI (ITA) | 13) Florian HAUF (GER) |
| 7) Chris STEELE (NZL) | 14) Vlad ABRAMOV (RUS) |

15) Slawek PLICHTA (POL)

10. Summary & Recommendations

- 10.1 For the first edition of this World Championship, the event was a great success and the Helsinki organisers delivered the event in an excellent manner.
- 10.2 The challenge for this event now is to manage its success and ensure that the proposed programme is properly considered against the logistical and practical realities of delivering and running the event.
- 10.3 ISAF should review the format of the event, the number of entries and the number of boats required from organisers in order to ensure a workable format is possible.
- 10.4 ISAF should continue to appoint an ISAF Course Representative (an IRO experienced in match racing) who is not from the Host MNA.
- 10.5 ISAF should review the concept of the event against the concept of the Nations Cup (i.e. ensure there is no duality of purpose for the top youth match racing sailors).
- 10.6 Video footage (even only highlights) should be available for each racing day.

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ISAF Technical Delegate

16 August 2014