

ISAF Sailing World Championships 2007 – Finn Gold Cup

Cascais, Portugal, July 5-11

Monday 9th July

High winds keep fleets ashore

After last night's very windy conditions, this morning dawned bright and breezy at the ISAF Sailing World Championships. In fact it was very breezy. Over 35 knots was recorded on the more sheltered inshore course area 1 where the Star and Tornado fleets were due to sail their medal races today. On the outside course, and especially on course area 4 where the Finns were due to start their gold and silver fleet racing, it was blowing considerably more. The fleets were kept ashore, despite the predictable displays of bravado from the Finn sailors.

Throughout the day the wind buffeted the marina and swept chairs along the decking like plastic cups. With not even a cloud in the sky, the deafening flapping of the press tent was interspersed with hourly updates on the wind strength and the announcement of the next fleet to have its racing cancelled. By 18.00, the Finn sailors had been kept waiting for seven hours, but the wind on course four was still over 30 knots, so the organisers admitted defeat and the sailors were finally sent home.

What this means for the sailors is that tomorrow there will be two races sailed as per schedule and that the lost races will not be re-sailed. Race director Henry van der Att emphasised at the final press conference tonight that only classes that have sailed less than the minimum required by the sailing instruction will play catch up. The Finns have already sailed five, which was the minimum to constitute an opening series.

Get to know the sailor: Chris Cook

If I were not in Cascais I would be...in Toronto, hanging out with my girlfriend and probably training.

My top tip for this week is...hopefully you came prepared and fit and ready for this. Breeze on!

My main strength is...probably making comebacks

My proudest moment is...certainly I think coming third in the Gold Cup in Moscow in 2005. That was a big moment for me.

My friends would say that I'm....a little bit crazy maybe

I am very bad at...losing

I think the favourites this week are...well Emilios wants it badly but you have to give keep an eye on Ed Wright.

The best thing so far about Cascais is...definitely the hospitality. When in first came here I didn't think it was going to be all that hospitable, but it turns out they are just a great bunch of people here. I'm really impressed

If I were in charge of sailing I'd...probably not change much right now, I think I would make more events like this one, where everyone's world championships are all together. I like this format and the way they do this.

Event format

Chris Cook elaborated on the benefits of a combined world championship "Outside of Canada, we

don't get to intermix much with other Canadian sailors. I think we have a pretty close team which has got tighter over the past year, but outside of the Canadian team and the Finn class it's pretty hard to keep tabs on everything and that's why I like this format because you get to meet top sailors in other classes.”

“I also like the format we have here this week.” Two daily allocated fleets of about 40 sail a opening series to qualify for a gold and silver fleet for two days before the final medal race. “I've always been a fan of the split fleet format such as we have used in Holland at the now Breitling regatta. It's good for me because it gives me a little bit more room to manoeuvre. I know that some of the Laser sailors coming into the class also like it, as it gives them a advantage over others who are more used to larger fleets. I do think there are a lot of things that should change about the Finn Gold Cup format. For example I think we should get rid of the triangle courses. No one else does that any more, so it's a problem. Perhaps it is time to move on.”

SPEAKING ABOUT THE WEEK HE SAID, “SO FAR I HAVE ONLY MADE TWO MISTAKES IN THE SERIES, AND THAT'S STOPPED ME FROM BEING IN A WINNING POSITION RIGHT NOW, SO THAT'S PRETTY GOOD. FOR THE REST OF THE REGATTA I JUST WANT TO KEEP DOING WHAT I'VE BEEN DOING SO FAR, AND THEN GO INTO THE MEDAL RACE WITH A CHANCE TO WIN.” THEN HE ADDED WRYLY, “BUT I GUESS THAT'S EVERYONE'S PLAN RIGHT NOW WITH SUCH A TIGHT SERIES. IT'S A SHAME WE LOST TODAY. IT'S A BIT OF WASTED DAY. I COULD HAVE BEEN GETTING MORE REST.”

As for the medal race itself, Cook has some serious worries about the way they are conducted. “Well to start with, I've been at the losing end of a bunch of them. However, I do think that the medal race idea is a good one but that the double points is wrong. I don't think they should do that. It's almost like they are looking for an upset, looking to get on video the disappointment of somebody losing unjustly. I don't like that idea. I like the idea of the top ten going into a race at the end, but at the end of the day if someone goes into the medal race with a 10 point lead they really deserve to win the event.”

“IT DOESN'T EVEN MATTER HOW LONG THE RACE TURNS OUT TO BE. YOU CAN HAVE A HALF HOUR RACE OR AN HOUR RACE LIKE WE DID IN HOLLAND AND IT CAN TURN INTO A CRAP SHOOT JUST THE SAME. YOU JUST HAVE TO MAKE IT A FAIR RACE. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THERE IS SO MUCH PRESSURE TO HAVE A MEDAL RACE THAT THEY DO IT AT ALL COSTS. SOMETIMES IT SEEMS LIKE IF THE WIND DROPS TO ZERO KNOTS, IT IS KEPT GOING EVEN THOUGH IT'S NO LONGER A FAIR RACE. I THINK IT JUST FAVOURS THE MEDIA A LITTLE TOO MUCH.”

Final races

Racing continues – weather permitting – tomorrow, Tuesday, at the same time of 13.00 with two races scheduled on course area 5, the outer course that was the scene of Saturday's extreme racing. Some Finn sailors – and certainly the photographers – are hoping for more of the same, but perhaps a bit less wind than today.

Full results can be found on the event website

Lots more photos can be found at www.finnclass.org/Photos/finn_gold_cup_2007_photos.htm

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Class website: www.finnclass.org

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Links:

ISAF Sailing World Championships: www.cascaisworlds2007.com

International Sailing Federation (ISAF): www.sailing.org

Notes for Editors

ISAF Sailing World Championships 2007

Over 1,300 sailors from 76 nations are competing at the 2007 ISAF Sailing World Championships, from 28 June-13 July in Cascais, Portugal. The Championships are the principal qualification regatta for the 2008 Olympic Sailing Competition, with 75% of all national places to be decided. 'The Wind Is Calling' is the official motto for the 2007 Worlds.

ISAF has appointed Sportshows and CSI Sports to manage TV production and distribution before, during and after the event. Footage and VNR's will be available – for more information please contact marketing@isaf.co.uk.