



20/3/2008

39 Trofeo S.A.R. Princesa Sofia MAPFRE

Top 10 on starting block.

The 5th day of racing in the 39th Trofeo Princesa Sofia MAPFRE didn't live to its expectations. Too strong in the morning, shifty at lunch time and dying in the afternoon, the wind allowed for 10 races only to be completed across all the classes. The 470 men and women had their hope cut short after their race was cancelled after the start. Same fate for the second race in the Finn and Laser radial. The Laser standard fleets didn't even hit the water. Two races were successfully sailed in the Yngling, Tornado, 49er and RS:X events.

Peter-Jan and Hannes Peckolt (GER) claimed back the pole position they hold earlier this week. With a 6th and a first today, they prove they can handle both light and strong winds. However, their margin is minimal with 2 points over Pietro and Gianfranco Sibello (ITA) who have collected a 4th bullet today, and 3 points from third placed, 2005 World Champions Rodion Luka and Geogiy Leonchuk. The Australians Nathan Outteridge and Ben Austin have missed an occasion to perform in the breeze after collecting a disqualification at the start of the first race. The World champions are placed in 4th position but are still within reach of the title. The top 10 teams qualified for the Medal Race are representing 10 nations, a good indication of the high quality of the fleet who has gathered in Mallorca before the European Championship next week.

Nick Dempsey (GBR) is increasing his lead to 15 points in the RS:X men fleet with a second and a first today. "The wind was shifty and you had to be really on the ball!! I sailed really well today. I sailed fast, made no mistake, and went the right way: I had a solid day!"

While Dempsey will prove hard to beat tomorrow for the medal race, the other places on the podium are opened with only 10 points between Przemyslaw Miarczyński (POL) in second position and Byron Kokalanis (GRE) in 8th!

The Olympic selection between Casper Bouman and Dorian Rijsselberghe (NED) will resume in Hyères. Despite an irregular regatta, Bouman has secured a place in the medal race, while his team mate will settle for a 15th position. "We train together but Dorian is more and more becoming the competition.", admits Bouman. "This regatta is very important for me because I want to win the Olympic selections." Rijsselberghe has a more relaxed approach: "We train together and it goes really well. I don't feel the pressure because of the selection. I will just see how it goes and will make the most of it!"

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The French RS:X sailors Faustine Merret and Charline Picon suffered from the shifty conditions. While Merret loses two places to 5th overall, Charline Picon drops out of the most coveted top 10 to 12th overall, losing 5 places after finishing in the 20th in both races.

Blanca Manchon (ESP) is the new entry in the top 10 in 7th position. Alessandra Sensini and Marina Alabau have placed in first and second (or vice-versa!) all week but could be threatened tomorrow by Bryony Shaw (GBR) and Zofia Klapacka (POL) in 3rd and 4th position. The Pole has sailed to perfection with two victories.

Another victory for Chris Cook in the only Finn race today brings the Canadian on the 10th place and in contention for the medal race. The three Polish sailors, pressured by their selection fall just outside the top ten, 4 points apart in 11th, 12th and 13th positions! The gap is increasing at the top with big margins between the top 3. It is a done deal for Ben Ainslie who enjoys a 23 points lead over Ivan Kljakovic Gaspic (CRO). The Croatian is also pretty safe with 18 points gap from Zach Railey (USA) who is his only threat for the silver medal.

A full week of racing was not enough to separate the 2 Russian Yngling teams in contention for Olympic selection. They each took a race but it is now Skudina/Krutskikh/Ivanova who will enter the Medal race in the lead. In another Olympic selection dual, the French team are here “under the scrutiny” of their Federation, Anne Le Helley’s boat takes the lead over Anne Le Berre’s team and sneak into 9th position. Le Berre is, missing out the Medal Race by just one point in 11th place!

As expected, Petra Niemann (GER) is leading the Laser radial fleet by 22 points. The Medal Race will be a German affair with 5 sailors in the top ten!

First victory in the Tornado regatta for Austrians Thomas Zajac and Thomas Czajka. With 8 boats on the starting line, the Tornados will have a last normal fleet race to close their regatta.

Cancelled races in the Laser standard and the 470 fleets have cut short the last hopes to climb into the top 10. Placed in second place overall, Stefanie Rothweiler and Vivien Kussatz (GER) had slipped out of the top 10 yesterday after hitting something in the water and retiring from the race. At only a point from the Medal Race, the Germans who are among the class favourites had no chance today to come back to the score.

The Medal Races are scheduled from 12 PM on Friday with the first start given to the Yngling, Finn and 49er.

A light south-westerly reaching 10 knots is expected.





Don't miss the excitement with the Race Online on the event website which will bring you the races "live" mark by mark!

Pictures are available to download from the website www.trofeoprincesasofia.org with credit to be given as instructed. Rough footage will also be available throughout the week with a fee.

For more information please contact Corinne McKenzie on corinne.mckenzie@orange.fr or on the Spanish mobile: +34 648 788 659 or by sms only on +33 670101813

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