2004 European Championship
August 22-28
Larmor Plage, France

54 competitors representing 12 countries across Europe descended on Larmor Plage to contest the European Championship and an automatic entry to the 2005 Worlds. Pepe Perez and daughter Elena Lopez conducted a thorough measurement on the boats and sails and approved all boats to sail. However, the French Open, held just prior missed a few days due to inclement weather that continued on to the 1st day of the Europeans, causing measurement to be conducted in between intermittent rain showers and blustery conditions. Remnants of the system from Hurricane Charlie that devastated Florida the week prior reformed to bring heavy winds, rain and big seas to cancel the 1st day of the Europeans. Day 2 found the wind subsiding, and with the competitors sent out, 2 races were held in the maximum of Snipe conditions. Big seas and consistent winds of 20-23 knots challenged the fleet with only a few casualties of a broken rudder, jib wire and tired sailors showing in the results column. The Spaniards were thriving in the heavy air with Rayco Tabares/Gonzalo Morales and Jordi Triay/Jose Escudero winning races 1 & 2. Leading the day was Francisco (Paco) Sanchez/Javier Jimenez with a consistent 2-2.

The 2nd day or facing found lighter breezes and generally better conditions for 2 races. Each race had a different wind velocity with the range for the day from 5-15 knots. Sanchez/Jimenez sailed consistently again in all conditions posting a 1-3 for the day. Brothers Enrico & Franco Solerio had a slow start in the days first race, but rallied to win the last race of the day.

The last day of racing brought more wind and 2 races were squeezed in while the rain and wind rallied. Paolo Tomsic/Andrej Mocilnik of Italy port tacked the fleet the 1st race and went on to finish 3rd, while Paco/Javier sailed another consistent race securing their title before the last race was held. But the competition was still tough at the top and the last race found Sanchez/Jimenez winning with Tomsic/Mocilnik close behind and Tabares/Morales in 3rd.

Congratulations must be given not only to all competitors but to the Race Committee and Jury as well. The RC, chaired by Jose LeFouler ran excellent races, adjusting the courses as necessary and calling for the correct courses as the wind dictated. More races would have been run if a day hadn't been lost to extreme weather.

The Jury must also be congratulated. Cesar Sans, a former Snipe sailor from Spain drove up to France to help judge and found himself assisting the righting of one of the women's boats the first day, pulling one of the crew into the inflatable due to exhaustion. Cesar (or Fidel as he's known) was happy to sail the boat back and was happy reminiscing at the bar about how much fun Snipes still are to sail, especially with a pretty girl as your crew!

Social
Members of the Societe Nautique de Larmor Plage greeted all competitors and guests like they were family. Club members tended bar, cooked and served the dinner with plenty of French break and wine. The prizegiving had everyone under the tent as rain was falling, but it didn't dampen the spirits or camaraderie of Snipe sailors.

Every country has key people who are their Snipe families or stalwarts. France has Michel and Marion Beaudouin and Sylvie LeBour and Gilles Boisaubert. These two couples must be credited with the growth and enthusiasm for the Snipe Class in France. Their collaboration to make this a successful event showed in every detail and in the friendship and hospitality to everyone present.

Observations
European Snipe sailors are ready for any weather and conditions that are thrown at them. It was impressive to watch the boat handling and seamanship and lack of equipment failure after the first days racing in gear-busting conditions. It's a test to the quality of Snipe sailors, their equipment and quality of boats being built. The only other observation was that in virtually every race, there were only ever about 5-8 boats on the line with huge line sag. Possibly this was due to the large seas and at times heavy air.
Results

Skipper/Crew
1. Francisco Sanchez/Javier Jimenez
2. Rayco Tabares/Gonzalo Morales
3. Paolo Tomasic/Andrej Močilnik
4. Ulrik Sandvig/Steffen Skoøenberg
5. Diogo Talone/Pedro Pinto
6. Francisco Palacios/Alfonso Rodriguez
7. Enrico/Franco Solerio
8. Antonino NOuette/Guillaume Capit
9. Joan Marc Rigo/Aldo Diaz
10. Karl Otte Boek/Alexandra Wang
11. Francisco Ibanez/Juan Merayo
12. Felix Gancedo/Angela Pumagiega
13. Birger Hansen/Jannet Krefting
14. Pietro Fantoni/Jacopo Ferrari Bravo
15. Pedro Saara/Cristina Triay
16. Giovanni/Dina Galeottti
17. Christian Andersen/Rasmus Rozentals
18. Ola Nygard/Jeanette Schouten
19. Robert Winther/Martin Persson
20. Jordi Triay/Jose Escudero
21. Alejandro Rodati/Tom Stahl
22. Martin Bermudez/Carmen Vergara
23. Henrik Jorhor/EBba Fris
24. Alain Ferenc/Eric Gillop
25. Eivind Thingvold/Kristoffer Nysether
26. Luis Pessanha/Miguel Talone
27. Maxim Kuzmin/Alexander Shirotov
28. Stefano Longhi/Laura Lautier
29. Jostein Groden/Asbjorn Grodem
30. Alar Sproands/Mats Gustafsson
31. Torger Tidblad/Frode Midttun
32. Dirk DeBoock/Frederic Delmes
33. Nicolo Paolillo/Simona Cristofori
34. Fabio Rochelli/Daniele Soncin Rochelli
35. Mathieu Theroni/Morgan Guilhou
36. Jan Peeters/Ann VanDaele
37. Jerome Thomas/Guillaume Louveau
38. David Dufour/Damien Cauzad
39. Ben/Nadia Van Cauwenbergh
40. Jussi Savela/Kari Tuomala
41. Alan Williams/Liz Crouch
42. Alexey Krylov/Eugeny Ryzhikov
43. Francisco Gonzalez/Francisco Perdomo
44. Kai Saarhola/Markus Wilk
45. Rene/Romain LeBour
46. Margarita Cameselle/Ana Barbeita
47. Jean-Nenice Coquelle/Pierre-Xavier Boubee
48. Tomek Slodecki/Zbigniew Rakocy
49. Fabian Brulvik/Fredrik Rosenberg
50. Brian/Ian Gregory
51. Kristine Schussler/Cecilie Hurlen
52. Tanguy Leglatin/Guillaume Damblans
53. Gastan Berthou/Pauline Metzger
54. Stephane Bariou/William Wiand

Country/Sail: ESP29724, ESP29884, ITA30009, NOR27977, POR29958, ESP30060, ITA29976, FRA29889, NOR29088, ESP29870, ITA30073, ESP30243, BEL25754, DEN29916, NOR31569, SVE29860, ESP69629, ITA29869, RUS29480, SOP30008, RUS29490, BEL29060, ITA29195, FRA28540, BEL29177, FRA29856, FRA29726, BEL30008, FIN28349, GBR29834, RUS29490, ESP30147, FIN30030, FRA29703, ESP29848, FRA29906, POL29475, NOR29686, GBR28491, NOR29725, FRA26802, FRA29101


Photos: upper left: beach launching. Lower left: Paco Sanchez checks the line. Upper right: Paolo Cristofori hike off the line. Above: Thomas/Louveau lead a crowd around the mark. All photos by Biehl.