



by Pietro Fantoni

Racing in Northern Europe often means racing in cold temperatures and windy weather. But the wind and cold, with clouds and patches of sun in quick succession, didn't cool the sailors who arrived in this corner of Poland.

This is due to the warm friendliness of Zibi Rakocy and the Snipe Polish community. It was one of the best organized events in Europe in recent years. Zibi and his team did a fantastic job, working with a number of sponsors, a marina, and especially the town of Kamien Pomorski, which was proud to host the European Championship of the Snipe Class or, as they say, the Class Słanka (pronunciation: swonka). Thank you, dziękuję

Open Europeans

It was also the first Open European Championship, with no selections or quotas for each country, and the event was open to non-European teams. I believe that almost all of those present agreed that the experiment has been positive. The number of competitors (increased compared to the previous Europeans) proves this and the high level of sailors, at least in the first positions, has not decreased. The Open Europeans ensure a good number of participants,

European Championship - Spain takes Jr & Sr Titles



desired image of the organizers and sponsors, gives the opportunity to the host country to bring many boats, and enables many sailors to participate. As it emerged during the sailors' meeting, the idea of opening the Europeans which was until 2012 restricted to a limited number, has been successful

and some skeptics will have to objectively reconsider their positions. The benefits of openness are clear; while the drawbacks (mainly the decline of participants in some national regattas - once qualifiers for the Europeans - allegedly caused by the opening of the Europeans) are still to be demonstrated.

Meetings, social events and parties

This regatta had it all. Sailors' meeting, the National Secretaries meeting, opening ceremony with a parade of the various nations, cannon shots, speeches and fireworks, award ceremonies at the end of each day, concerts in the main square, organ concerts in the cathedral, dinners at the town hall at the nearby hotel, free beers and local snacks after each day of sailing. All these events enhanced the "Serious Fun" side of our class. Moreover, beyond the official events prepared by the excellent Polish organization, I want to remember the impromptu parties at

the marina with large quantities of Okocim beer, and the legendary parties organized by the Belgian team, which involved many

sailors from other countries and featured music and dancing almost until dawn.

All this was possible thanks to the location. Kamien Pomorski is a small town in Pomerania, near the border with Germany, with its churches and its characteristic buildings, vestiges of a past that has been Swedish, Prussian, German and Polish, before and after the fall of the Iron Curtain. The marina, the main square where a stage was set up, boat park, hotels, bars, and restaurants were all within walking or biking distance. This certainly helped socialization among the sailors.

Race area and weather conditions

For days the flags on the pier never ceased to wave vigorously, stretched out by the wind. In the morning, we looked out the window of our hotel, past the severe vaguely Soviet architecture, and wondered whether the flags were made of cardboard rather than cloth.

The race course was a 20 minute sail from the ramp, even less time if it was blowing hard and you were able to sail a furious and adrenaline-charged reach, pumping the main without fail. It was placed in front of the marina, within a lagoon (Zalew Kamienski), separated from



the Baltic Sea by a low and narrow strip of land. The lagoon is connected at its NE end to the sea by a channel, and to the SW it is connected by another channel to another larger lagoon (Zalew Szczecinski), in which the river Oder enters and marks the border between Germany and Poland. The water is brown, fresh and shallow (2-3 meters). The windward mark was always set close to the low coast of an island. For this reason the wind was always gusty, with large shifts.

It was a regatta with medium-strong winds. There was not a single moment of a windward leg of a single race where the hiking straps were not necessary. The first day the wind was very strong. We all know the class limit of the wind in closed waters (25 knots), as well as it how it should be measured and how long it should be checked. The race committee estimated that it was within the limits for racing. However, almost half the fleet was not able to finish the only race held on the first day due to damages and failures. The reason for so many withdrawals is due to gusts (some measured almost 30 knots), shallow waters (a trouble in case

of capsizing), and small waves (compared to the wind), which certainly did not favor planing and jibing. The large percentage of withdrawals (only 38 out of 61 boats finished the race) is a

cause for reflection. During the National Secretaries' meeting we discussed the possibility of changing the rule that determines how the wind has to be measured (taking into account any gusts). On other days the wind was moderate, from 12 to 15 knots average, but always very gusty and shifty, sometimes with gusts as high as 20 knots.

Race Report

I do not really like to write detailed reports of the races: what happened on



Trigo Morias and Tomas Pires de Lima - POR

this or that leg, who won, who finished second and who finished third. I am not so interested. This time I also have to admit that I did not see the races from the front: because of our meager 120 kilos, Julia and I fiercely fought from the middle of the fleet, against strong winds, damages to the boat, opponents, and mark roundings more similar to boardings by pirates. Clouded by fatigue, with lactic acid in the eyes ... it would be difficult for me to see and make a record of what happened in front of the fleet.

2014
EUROPEAN
CHAMPIONSHIP
TOP 6
THE MOST CHOSEN SAILS

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Many spectators were able to follow the races live with the GPS trackers (the first use for our class in a European race). You can watch the video and the interviews with daily leaders that SnipeToday filmed before and after the races.

Anyway, Raul DeValenzuela and Antolin Alejandro deservedly won the Championship thanks to a consistency that none of their opponents managed to maintain for all 9 races. For the Spanish team of Almeria this is the second consecutive title of European Champions. A confirmation. Also, we don't forget that Antolin a few days before won (as skipper) the Junior Europeans. Congratulations!

The surprise was the young Portuguese team of Tiago Morais and Tomas Pires De Lima. This junior team was even in the lead before the last day. Having young blood in the class is a good news.

After a difficult start to the regatta (ret-5-15-20 in the first two days), Jordi Lluís Mas Triay and crew were able to grab a good result on the podium, thanks to their two bullets in the last two days.

Alexandre Tinoco and Bernardo Low-beer from Brazil, after starting with three victories, scored a series of unexpected results that pushed them off of the podium.

Rounding out the top five teams were Victor Perez and Cristian Sanchez, also with a difficult final day.

Other winners of single races: Jostein Grodem and Maj Kristin Hansen Borgen (NOR), a little 'ups and downs' in the results, Manu Hens and Enrico Michel (BEL) winners of two races but with a bizarre series that left them heavily penalized (ret-20-ocs-ocs-6-1-1-2-3).

The Championship ended with the prize giving ceremony and speeches by sponsors and authorities and winners. Each sailor was called to the stage and received a present. At the end of the ceremony Bronislaw Karpinski, the



mayor of Kamien Pomorski, along with Zbigniew Rakocy, General Secretary for Europe, gave the SCIRA flag to Pepe Perez, in representation of Spain.

So dziękuję Kamien Pomorski and see you in 2016 in Santiago de la Ribera, Spain, for the next European Championship.

Junior European Championship 2014

Skipper/Crew	Country/Sail	Total
1. Antolin de Ona/Francisco Martin	ESP29870	12
2. Ignacio Cano/Baltasar Ali Martin	ESP30146	19
3. Aurora Ojeda/Juan Cruz	ESP30238	24
4. Diogo Machado Pinto/Goncalo Santos	POR29994	30
5. Arturo Chao Correa/Guillermo Tardido	ESP29924	30
6. Natalia Wlarczycka/Kacper Madon	POL30537	55
7. Ole Martin Moan/Christiane Moan	NOR28452	62

2014 European Championship Final Results top 15 of 61

	Skipper/Crew	Country	Sail #	Finishes	Total
1.	Raul de Valenzuela/Antolin de Ona	ESP	31237	7-3-4-6-(8)-(ocs)-2-3-1	26
2.	Tiago Morais/Tomas Pires de Lima	POR	28767	2-4-6-4-(16)-3-6-(13)-6	31
3.	Jordi Triay/Lluís Mas	ESP	29698	(rat)-5-15-(20)-1-5-4-1-5	36
4.	Alexandre Tinoco/Bernardo Low-Beer	BRA	31151	1-1-1-1-1-4-9-(12)-(dsc)-10	37
5.	Victor Perez/Cristian Sanchez	ESP	28676	4-2-8-5-(110-2-8-8-(13)	37
6.	Damian Borrás/Ivan Moreno	ESP	31247	(dnc)-7-5-2-7-(11)-7-6-7	41
7.	Enrico Solerio/Sergio Simonetti	ITA	30269	3-(dnc)-2-8-5-4-20-(ocs)-2	44
8.	Juan daban Tiscar/Garardo Prago	ESP	30987	(dnc)-(16)-10-12-2-8-5-9-4	50
9.	Yannick Laumans/Kai Kinneer	BEL	28855	6-11-11-3-9-(20)-9-22-(20)	60
10.	Christian S.Andersen/Celina Skjodt	DEN	29916	13-14-13-9-3-(16)-3-(21)-12	67
11.	Lucas Orm/Axel Edwall	SWE	29943	12-6-(14)-(19)-13-6-10-7-14	68
12.	Jean Jacques Frabault/Cyril Laprabandera	FRA	30757	15-9-7-24-(30)-10-(31)-5-8	78
13.	Paolo Lambertanghi/Yuri Miorandi	ITA	30009	(dnc)-17-17-15-(32)-7-14-4-11	85
14.	Manu Hens/Enrico Michel	BEL	31174	(dnf)-20-(ocs)-ocs-6-1-1-2-3	95
15.	Jostein Grodem/Maj Kristin Hansen	NOR	30186	8-13-(dnc)-1-19-22-(36)-15-9	99
16.	Birgun Jansen/Ivar Jacobsen	NOR	30090	9-15-12-(33)-21-14-19-24-(28)	114
17.	Per Edwall/Ole Martin Moan	SWE	30068	5-10-(50)-13-(33)-17-13-27-30	115
18.	Miguel Cid Montoya/Carman Pumariega	ESP	30869	(26)-22-18-14-12-(23)-17-18-19	120
19.	Ignacio Cano/Baltasar Ali Martin	ESP	30146	14-(ocs)-20-31-15-12-(34)-17-16	125
20.	Jaime Ossut/Marta Perez	ESP	30242	(dnc)-19-26-17-18-13-11-12-(ocs)	126
21.	Aurora de Ojeda/Juan Cruz	ESP	30238	11-12-28-(30)-18-15-(43)-23-27	134
22.	Dirk de Bock/Yannick Bongarts	BEL	30400	20-(ocs)-3-10-(dnf)-dnf-15-10-15	135
23.	Magnus Hedemark/Anette Malsom Myhra	NOR	30312	24-8-19-(44)-10-31-29-22-(35)	142
24.	Fabio Rochelli/Daniela Semac	ITA	30983	22-21-(32)-7-25-24-23-(29)-25	147
25.	Lukasz Sokolowski/Piotr Sokolowski	POL	29894	18-24-24-22-(37)-28-16-25-(31)	157

Photos by Robert Hajduk

