

SPANISH ARMADA WINS EUROBATTLE

A double-anniversary regatta

Finland's oldest sailing club, Segelföreningen i Björneborg (BSF), celebrated its 150th anniversary by hosting the Snipe Class European Championships of 2006. The event coincided with the 75th anniversary of Snipe No. 1, built in Texas in 1931. An impressive fifty-five Snipe crews from eleven countries showed up for the event in Pori, on the Gulf of Bothnia on the west coast of Finland. The impressive turnout was no doubt aided by the persistent marketing efforts of avid Finnish snipe sailors Jussi Sävelä, commodore of BSF, and Kai Saarhelo, board member of BSF and SCIRA national secretary for Finland.

Spain had the largest team with a total of eleven boats in the regatta. Italy and Norway were represented by nine boats each, while Finland mustered eight boats. Sizable teams were also fielded by Belgium, Russia and Sweden with five snipes each. Portugal fielded two participants, while solitary crews came from Denmark, France, Poland and Portugal. Notable absences were Croatia, Germany and the United Kingdom.

Spanish Youngster takes Nordics

The European Championships were preceded by the Open Nordic Championships. 42 boats were entered, using the opportunity to tune up on the waters of the Europeans. After six races over three days, the Nordic Championship went way south, to Spain. Young Jordi Triay with his crew Jose Escudero gained a close-cut victory over some 'real' Nordics, the Norwegian brothers Jostein and Asbjörn Grödem in second spot, followed by their countrymen Ulrik Sandvig and Henrik Grythe in third place. The strong Belgian placings of fourth, fifth and eighth were a warning of things to come in the Europeans. Most of the Spanish were still 'sandbagging', cruising around near the course area, but not really showing their strength yet.

Nordics, top ten:

- 1) Jordi Triay – Jose Escudero, Spain, 19,5 p.
- 2) Jostein Grödem – Asbjörn Grödem, Norway, 22.5 p.
- 3) Ulrik Sandvig – Henrik Grythe, Norway, 34 p.
- 4) Bart Bomans – Jill Ponet, Belgium, 39.5 p.
- 5) Ben van Cauwenberg – Nadia Deferm, Belgium, 40 p.
- 6) Tiago Roquette – Hugo Teixeira, Portugal, 43 p.
- 7) Birger Jansen – Cecilia de Faire, Norway, 46 p.
- 8) Thierry den Hartig – Greet Jansen, Belgium, 49 p.
- 9) Perez Campos – Benitez Lazna, Spain, 51 p.
- 10) Andrea Borenienius – Charlotta Renvall, Finland, 53 p.

Enter the Spanish Armada

On the first day of the European Championship, the 110 sailors had to contend with shifty medium winds from the south-east, and a choppy sea of old offshore swells mixed up with fresh inshore waves. Rumors that the Spanish armada got shipwrecked in the English Channel were clearly false, as the Spanish proceeded to raid the coast of Finland. Admiral Pablo Fresneda from Almeria won two battles, ably seconded by his able lieutenants Ferrer de Alicante, Alvares de las Palmas and Gonzales de Canaria. The Spanish ships showed blazing downwind speed, and the crews displayed many well executed roll tacks. At the close of day 1, the

avant garde of the Armada commanded first, third, sixth and eighth place on the leaderboard.

The surprise of the day was a recent arrival from Malmö in neighboring Sweden, Henrik Jorhov and Ebba Friis, who at the opening ceremony promised to win the first race. They nearly carried it off, with a good lead around the first mark, but had to let a few boats past on the reachers. The Norwegians and Danes also scored within the top ten.

Unusual off-shore winds

The second day of the European Championship started out with a fresh breeze. But the offshore wind direction was a bit unusual. – We have not sailed in this kind of wind since the 1980s, admitted the local commodore Jussi Sävelä, who was sailing his own snipe in the regatta. For the first two races, the competitors had to contend with 40-degree shifts and a wind speed varying from 1 to 8 meters per second within short intervals. Once the top group was established, it started pulling away by several minutes. The winners of the day were Sanchez & Sanchez and Triay & Escudero.

For the third race, the fleet got away to a late start, at about 17 hrs. Fortunately, the Nordic sun stays up almost until midnight in these latitudes, so the race was held and completed successfully. Again, a Spaniard took the gun, this time Alfredo Gonzalez. The positive surprise of the day was Eduard Skornykov of Russia, ninth in the standings. He turned the weather mark first in several races, before being passed by the Spaniards and Belgians on the downwind legs.

Justin and Jean Jacques Frebault of France, representing the not too many Snipe sailors of France, also started their championship well in fifteenth place. After five races, the battle for the gold medal was on. Pablo Fresneda and Cesar Travado were still in the lead, but were hotly chased by the brother & sister team of Francisco Sanchez Ferrer and Marina Sanchez Ferrer, only 4 points behind.

The Italians start moving

On the third day of racing, the conditions off Pori were apparently to the Italian taste. On the menu were a fresh breeze from the northeast, puffy 20-degree shifts and flat water. In the second race of the day, Pietro Fantoni and crew Jacopo Ferrari-Bravo were probably lustily singing O Sole Mio as they pulled away to a solid lead. His countryman Roger Olivieri from Lago di Garda kept the second slot for a lap or more, but finally had to be content with a fourth place. In the first race of the day, fellow Triestino Stefano Longhi, SCIRA European Secretary, nabbed a good third place. Giampiero Poggi returned to his earlier form and grabbed a useful eighth place. The geographical Italian boot got a well-deserved polishing up, with Poggi and Fantoni climbing to tenth and eleventh in the total standings.

On the Scandinavian front, the Edwall brothers from Askim on the west coast of Sweden led the first race and finished in a very



satisfactory fourth place, while the eighth place was taken by the young team of Skjoldvang – Löwenborg, ably coached by the Great Dane Jan Persson, all hailing from Espergärde on the strait of Elsinore.

Spaniards take top five on final day

The final day started out with a flat calm. Finally at 13:35 the starting gun went off, on a line favoring the committee boat end. When the rumble in the jungle on the starting line cleared, the sight was a familiar one: ESP, ESP, ESP... The Ferrers came first to the windward mark, with Pablo Fresneda and Alfredo Gonzales snapping at their heels. On the second beat, Fresneda read the motion of the ocean best, pulled away from the Ferrer Movistars, put an open cover on them, and that was that – the fate of the European Championship was sealed.

As the field kept slowly creeping in, the clock kept ticking towards the 15:00 deadline after which no start could be made. The mutinous sailors decided en masse to vote with their tillers by heading directly into port. The PRO Ari Ahonen on the starting vessel Joella must have felt like Captain Bligh on the Bounty, watching his crew sail away into the sunset. Thus, nine races were completed, reaching the magic limit for allowing two discards. After crunching the numbers for the 55 boats, the leaderboard read like a Spanish-Belgian spaghetti western: five Spaniards in front, chased by two top guns from 'the gang of Antwerp'.

The Spanish keys to success

How can Spain be so dominant? We put the question to Pepe Perez, the National Secretary of the Spanish Snipe class. – “We have active Snipe fleets with some 200 boats all over our country. For our EC team, we have picked the cream of the crop from Almeria, Alicante, Cadiz, Madrid, the Balears and the Canary Islands. The Spanish Yachting Federation supports the Snipe as a feeder channel to the Olympic classes. For example, Paco Sanchez belongs to the National 470 team, while his sister Marina crewed on the Spanish Yngling in the Athens Olympics. We are especially supportive of our juniors. We pay their entry fees, we organize good boats for them, and we drive them to the championships. A successful move has been to arrange the national Junior Championship one week before the senior nationals, in the same venue. The juniors can borrow quality boats, and may find supporters and mentors among the seniors.”

The 'gang from Antwerpen'

To the surprise of many, the Belgians were clearly the runner-up team in the Europeans, beaten only by the Spanish. Bart Bomans, how is this possible, with a tiny Snipe fleet of only 22 boats? – “We have a friendly group, the 'band from Antwerp'. Most sail with mixed teams, our girl crews are nimble and agile. They contribute their experience from light, sensitive craft such as Europe dinghies. The band meets in the winter for gym training and tactical discussions. In spring, part of the band heads north, part south to the major regattas. After returning, we pool our observations and experiences, and try to grow wiser. We practice boat handling and race tactics on our little lake, but for



next year we will train more on the open North Sea.”

Blue and white blues

The results of the blue-and-white Finnish home team were a disappointment: Best boat in 30th place, a far cry from the silver of 1974 and bronze of 1991 when the Europeans were previously held in Finland. The two top Finnish teams were young, agile, gym-trained and experienced in other dinghy classes. The old Snipe masters are currently contemplating how to shed 20+

20+ kilograms from the total crew weight and 20+ years from the total crew age.

Arrangements on the water

Considering the tricky and shifty conditions, the Race committee performed its work well. Marks were shifted and courses changed when the need arose. Starting times were upheld punctually, and after some late arrivals, competitors learned to leave port in time to reach the course area. The workboats and jury boats were of suitable size and speed to fit their task. On the light-weather days, the media boat sometimes kicked up some disturbing waves, for which this reporter hereby apologizes.

Press & media

Throughout the event, daily press releases with results were prepared in English, Swedish and Finnish, and distributed to websites and newspapers in the home countries of the participants. Stories and pictures were published, not only on the EC and SCIRA websites, but in exotic media such as the ISAF *Making Waves* site, the Skota.se sailing website in Sweden, the Clubracer website in Belgium, Budstikken newspaper in Bårum, Norway and the *Diario Sur* daily in Malaga, Spain. Both local and national TV were out on the course, videotaping the action.

Shore arrangements, social life

Upon returning to port from the day's racing, the sailors were met by the blast of 'Hard Rock Hallelujah' as performed by Lordi, the first (and last?) Finnish group ever to win the Eurovision Song Contest. The boats were then parked on the paved ramp, which fit all 55 boats well, each boat having its own space, marked by nation. Beer and food were served in a tent close to the water's edge.

The traditional North-South football game was cancelled due to poor attendance. This was understandable, as the long days spent on the sea, waiting, drifting and racing caused most sailors to retire rather directly to their rented cottages, quite a distance from the BSF clubhouse.

The social events included a reception at City hall, a grill party in the hotel garden, and the final prize giving event in the hotel restaurant. At the final party, the winning Spanish team gave a sporty impression in their matching team clothes. The many presiding SCIRA officers, including Executive Director Jerelyn Biehl and European Secretary Stefano Longhi, were duly acknowledged for their contributions to the success of our dear Snipe class.

Henry Ericsson
Event Press Officer

2006 European Championship

August

Pori, Finland

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|-----|-----------|--|----------------------------------|-------|
| 1. | ESP26260 | Pablo Fresneda/Cesar Travado | 1-1-3-2-(10)-10-(25)-1-1 | 18 |
| 2. | ESP29724 | Francisco Sanchez Ferrer/Marina Sanchez | 3-8-1-6-3-(13)-(dsq)-4-3 | 27.75 |
| 3. | ESP29698 | Jordi Triay/Jose Escudero | 8-(ocs)-9-1-4-(12)-7-6-4 | 38.75 |
| 4. | ESP 30147 | Alfredo Gonzalez/Cristian Sanchez | 15-4-4-13-1-1-(20)-(19) | 39.5 |
| 5. | ESP29854 | Rayco Tabarez/Gonzalo Morales | 11-5-6-(32)-9-15-3-(16)-8 | 57 |
| 6. | BEL30265 | Thierry Den Hartigh/Greet Jansen | (27)-6-10-3-11-6-6-(37)-18 | 60 |
| 7. | BEL30356 | Emmanuel Hens/Thomas Van Schaftinghen | 16-(20)-2-10-2-(30)-2-15-20 | 67 |
| 8. | RUS29480 | Eduard Skornykov/Pavel Karachev | 20-16-13-7-8-7-(29)-2-(23) | 73 |
| 9. | ITA29685 | Giampiero Poggi/Silvia Boccato | 13-2-7-(43)-16-24-(dsq)-5-11 | 78 |
| 10. | ITA15790 | Pietro Fantoni/Jacopo Ferrari-Bravo | 12-24-19-(26)-5-32-1-8-10 | 78.75 |
| 11. | ESP30476 | Alejandro Fresneda/Borja Llopis | 9-13-21-11-13-(48)8-(22)-5 | 80 |
| 12. | NOR30498 | Ulrik Sandvig/Henrik Grythe | 19-3-5-12-17-(22)-21-(32)-16 | 93 |
| 13. | ESP30146 | Juan Castaneda Gonzalez/Felipe Cantero | 10-17-17-(39)-(28)-14-11-7-17 | 93 |
| 14. | BEL30357 | Bart Bomens/Jill Ponet | 2-7-16-28-6-16-23-(ret)-(ocs) | 98 |
| 15. | DEN29916 | Christian S. Andersen/Andreas Lowenborg | 7-15-(33)-16-18-8-22-(31)-14 | 100 |
| 16. | FRA28541 | Justin Frebault/Jean Jacques Frebault | 23-21-8-14-(24)-(26)-14-17-6 | 103 |
| 17. | ESP29321 | Victor Perez/Rafael Benitez | 22-(32)-8-7-23-4-(39)-13 | 105 |
| 18. | SWE30197 | Henrik Jorhov/Ebba Friis | 6-12-11-25-15-(38)-16-20-(dnf) | 105 |
| 19. | BEL30388 | Giovanni Galeotti/Floris Mortelmans | 18-(30)-25-4-(zfp)-21-27-3-9 | 107 |
| 20. | BEL30311 | Ben VanCauwenbergh/Nadia Deferm | 14-18-27-20-22-5-(28)-10-(34) | 116 |
| 21. | POR30045 | Tiago Roquette/Hugo Teixeira | 17-(ocs)-39-5-(ocs)-28-10-12-7 | 118 |
| 22. | ITA30474 | Stefano Longhi/Paolo Lambertenghi | 22-(32)-(49)-17-12-3-32-13-22 | 121 |
| 23. | NOR20186 | Jostein Grodem/Asbjorn Grodem | 4-11-(35)-30-20-(42)-30-11-21 | 127 |
| 24. | ESP29870 | Francisco Ibanez Gonzalez/Juan Merayo | 26-10-15-(41)-(ocs)-18-15-18-28 | 130 |
| 25. | ITA30334 | Fabio Rochelli/Daniela Semec | 24-9-12-22-(26)-(27)-17-23-24 | 131 |
| 26. | SWE30495 | Robert Winther/Emil Svensson | 30-14-14-(34)-19-9-(41)-27-31 | 144 |
| 27. | NOR29940 | Birger Jansen/Cecilia de Faire | 29-27-23-15-25-20-9-(41)-(36) | 148 |
| 28. | SWE30068 | Per/Axel Edwall | 21-31-22-24-27-4-(36)-21-(41) | 150 |
| 29. | ESP30242 | Jaime Miranda/Francisco Jimenez | 33-(dsq)-18-29-(zfp)-17-34-24-12 | 167 |
| 30. | FIN29859 | Andrea Bornius/Charlotta Renvall | 35-34-38-9-21-(45)-12-(50)-19 | 168 |
| 31. | RUS29490 | Maxim Kuzmin/Aleksander Shirokov | (42)-37-24-23-36-19-18-(47)-25 | 182 |
| 32. | FIN29642 | Ville Aalto/Setala/Jussi Nevas | 38-(ocs)-26-36-14-29-24-35-(39) | 202 |
| 33. | NOR30355 | Henning Balzar/Heinz Balzar | 43-29-(51)-(50)-31-11-35-28-26 | 203 |
| 34. | RUS29471 | Andrey Astashev/Andrey Samoilov | 34-28-(50)-38-47-2-13-(53)-43 | 205 |
| 35. | FIN29965 | Claus Carpelan/Risto Valjus | 31-33-(54)-46-(ocs)-37-19-25-15 | 206 |
| 36. | NOR30069 | Ola Nygard/Hans Magnus Nygard | 25-35-31-33-33-(43)-(40)-29-27 | 213 |
| 37. | SWE27696 | Ola Sjostrand/Mats Gustafsson | (51)-19-36-31-23-31-33-(42)-40 | 213 |
| 38. | NOR30312 | Magnus Hedemark/Asne Berner | 5-38-45-44-32-(ocs)-44-9-(ocs) | 217 |
| 39. | POL26744 | Piotr Manczak/Przemyslaw Plazka | (53)-44-29-18-37-25-43-26-(ocs) | 222 |
| 40. | FIN29892 | Stefan Winqvist/Alf Renvall | 40-(49)-(44)-21-30-35-42-14-42 | 224 |
| 41. | SWE30044 | Bernhard Rost/Nicklas Torlegard | 32-29-(43)-19-40-33-38-30-(46) | 231 |
| 42. | POR29996 | Miguel Graca/Ana Marques | 37-(40)-30-37-35-34-39-(46)-29 | 241 |
| 43. | ITA30530 | Alessandro Rodati/Barbara Bonnini | 46-25-20-35-43-(49)-(49)-43-33 | 245 |
| 44. | ITA29934 | Roger Olivieri/Silvia Pederiva | (50)-36-41-48-(49)-47-5-34-45 | 256 |
| 45. | NOR30354 | Magnus Christiansen/Michael Irgens | (48)-23-42-40-41-39-31-(45)-44 | 260 |
| 46. | FIN29019 | Timo Nurmi/Tmmi Isotalo | (49)-45-37-27-46-40-(51)-38-38 | 271 |
| 47. | ESP28913 | Amelia Gomez/Carmen Mateo | 36-41-40-45-42-(53)-37-(dnf)-35 | 276 |
| 48. | FIN30447 | Jussi Savela/Kari Tuomala | 39-46-(47)-(53)-44-46-46-33-32 | 286 |
| 49. | ITA28765 | Andrea Zaoli/Francesco Filippi | (52)-50-28-42-(52)-44-48-52-30 | 294 |
| 50. | FIN30450 | Kai Saarhelo/Markus Wikar | 45-43-46-47-38-36-47-(49)-(49) | 302 |
| 51. | ITA30213 | Giovanni Stella/Andrea Minardi | 41-26-(53)-49-39-(52)-45-51-51 | 302 |
| 52. | NOR29725 | Kristine Schuessler/Camilla Christenssen | (55)-48-48-(51)-48-51-26-36-48 | 305 |
| 53. | FIN30189 | Anders Cederberg/Reino Suonsilta | 44-47-(52)-(52)-45-41-52-40-37 | 306 |
| 54. | ITA30222 | Alberto Perdisa/Giampiero Joime | 47-42-(55)-54-51-54-50-44-47 | 335 |
| 55. | NOR28816 | Stian Pedersen/Cathrine Karlsson | (54)-51-34-(55)-50-50-53-48-50 | 335 |

