

October, 2012

The 2012 Seiko 49er Championships A French triumph in Italy

The Seiko 49er 2012 European Championships took place between September 9 and 15 in the beautiful surroundings of Lake Garda in northern Italy. Sixty three teams, representing eighteen nations, took part in the Championships, hosted by the Fraglia della Vela Riva yacht club.



photo : Roberto Vuilleumier

The overall winners were the experienced French team of Mathieu Frei and Yann Rocherieux

After two days of qualifying, ten races were held over the next three days with the final places being decided in the Grand Final, a new style of race that involved just the leading four crews in a 'winner takes all' format on a specially designed, spectator-friendly course.

The late summer weather delivered some thrilling racing in conditions that varied wildly from day to day. Overall, the winds were strong and conditions were difficult, especially during the thunderstorms that provided an interesting soundtrack to the racing on Day 3 !



photo : Peter Bucktrout

After six days of racing, the four teams who went through to the Grand Final were from France, Denmark, Great Britain and Croatia. The Danish team provided the week's most highly-debated talking point when they showed off their new trapezing technique in which Allan Norregaard stood on the shoulders of Anders Thomsen on each upwind leg.

The innovative and athletic trapezing of the Danes.

The Croatian team narrowly missed out on a medal in the Grand Final but their consolation was almost as valuable, as they won the 'Seiko King of the Downwind' prize of US\$2,500. The prize was awarded to the crew who had the best overall time for the downwind legs of selected races. In one race they averaged a remarkable 23 knots !



photo : Roberto Vuilleumier

The Croatian team was 'King of the Downwind.'

The Grand Final was won by the French team of Mathieu Frei and Yann Rocherieux who had sailed consistently well all week, with placings of 6-7-2-1 in the four races that made up the final round. In the Grand Final, they came through to take the gold medal with a commanding performance in the second half of the race, with the Danish team taking silver and the young partnership of James Peters and Ed Fitzgerald taking an unexpected third place, a remarkable achievement for a junior team.

The medal-winning teams received Seiko Velatura watches, and the 49er Association distributed to the sailors the spinnakers, sailing vests and other equipment that Seiko donated. Seiko has been the watch partner of the 49er Association since 2007.

Note: The last two days were broadcast live on the internet, thanks to the live tracking system provided by SAP. For video and results, see www.2012euros.49er.org



The Velatura 49er Class Chronograph