

Report on Buenos Aires 2007 29er Worlds

The Team:



The team was formed by the young boys Judge Ryan & Hans Henken onboard of Vortex, Max Fraser & the experienced coach and 29er sailor Alex Bernal, the new and promising 29er girls Emily Dellenbaugh & Briana Provancha.

The strong breeze sailors, Alain Huggler & Eric AAhkus and Ian Andrewes & Campbell Rivers (former 49er and 18-footer sailor), who provided an important quota of

excitement to everyone.

The team was completed with the Coach, Ignacio Zapiola from Argentina.

The Venue:

The Club Náutico San Isidro in the outskirts of huge Buenos Aires was the club hosting the championship. The Club is a very traditional and important club of San Isidro city. Before the 29er Worlds, the club held the Tornado Worlds.

The Rio de la Plata is the estuary formed by the combination of the Uruguay River and the Paraná River. It is a funnel-shaped indentation on the southeastern coastline of South America, extending 180 miles from the rivers' confluence to the Atlantic Ocean. On its widest part the river is 136 miles, making it the widest estuary in the world. Despite its wide, the river is quite shallow and needs constant dredging. In fact, some of

the races were sailed with no more than 6 inches of water under the dragger board.



The racing area on the brown waters of the river, along with its mainly calm weather conditions gave no quarter to the sailors. Picking puffs on the brown water and understanding the rhythmic and not so rhythmic shifts claimed to be the most difficult part of sailing.

Also, the characteristic short and deep waves very much complicated the bow of the 29er from sailing smoothly over the water. Argentines had a clear advantage on those typical conditions.

Qualy Races:

The “tune up” race had to be cancelled due to the lack of wind. The wind conditions never reached 4 knots. Sailors had to wait until the following day to see how fast they were going to be sailing.

The first day of qualy races started with calm winds. The wind had a speed of 6 knots from East at the beginning of the first race. Then, it decreased to 2 knots which required the RC to postpone races. Near 4pm, the wind increased to 6 knots and continued to increase during the remaining 3 races, reaching 15 knots in the last race, always from the same direction, East.



In the breeze, Alain Huggler and Eric Aahkus showed how to sail a boat fast. Unfortunately for them, the wind was not that windy in the following days. Judge Ryan and Hans Henken had a quite good first day in the light breeze. They finished 3rd and 4th in the first races. Max Fraser and Alex Bernal were the second best US team on that day, followed by Emily Dellebaugh and Brizna Provancha.

The second and last day of qualy races offered nice sailing conditions. The wind was stable from the East with intensity between 11 and 13 knots. The best US sailors during that day were Judge and Hans followed by Max and Alex, who had a very good first race finishing third.



On the last day of qualy races, races were cancelled due to lightning and strong gusts. Intense showers came along with huge gusts, being the stronger 37 knots. Sailors were able to see huge sand banks and dead trees were they were sailing (and capsizing) the previous days.

Two US teams, Ryan and Henken (19th) and Fraser and Bernal (24th), made it into the Gold Fleet (Top 25 sailors).

Final Races:

First day of sailing in the gold fleet showed how tough a gold fleet can be. Starts were a major problem for the team. Finding a place and making a gap to leeward proved to be essential.

On the Silver Fleet, the girls seemed to be gaining confidence, they scored two seconds a sixth and a fifth, their sailing, and especially, their speed were improving a lot. In the same fleet, Andrewes and Rivers had quite good first races (8th and 11th) before a problem with their rudder prevented them from finishing the third race of the day.

Huggler and Aahkus also sailed well on that first day. They finished 3rd and 2nd in two of the races.

The second day of the final series was an extremely difficult day for sailing. The race course was surrounded by showers, storm fronts and, also, thunders and lightning were present. This was probably the day that enabled Argentineans to make the difference. Other country teams were just disoriented. The best advice was sailing into the storm fronts, but the wind might shift to the other side or just die in a certain part of the course. Truth is that some of the races should have been abandoned.

In the silver fleet on the very last leg of the very last race, the wind completely changed of direction when crews were heading towards the finishing line. Suddenly, a thick fog and even thicker rain drops invaded the course. Sailors could see nothing. Then, the wind changed again, and, when our teams were really close to the finishing line, the RC picked up the line. The time for finishing had elapsed. Despite of what happened on this last race, the girls had quite a good day. They scored their first bullet in a 29er Worlds.



On the last day of races, the conditions were very calm winds from East North East direction and short and deep waves.

Only three races were sailed. The second race of the day was quite good for the US team. Judge and Hans finished second and Max and Alex ninth after rounding on the very first place the top mark. Conditions on that race were not stable but both teams managed to spot the gusts.

On the Silver Fleet, the girls had mathematical chances of beating the Swiss girls, but, unfortunately, after excellent and close races, the Swiss team won.

Final Results:

Final results for our teams on the Gold Fleet were Judge Ryan & Hans Henken (20th), Max Fraser & Alex Bernal (25th). On the Silver Fleet results were Emily Dellenbaugh & Briana Provancha (2nd), Alain Huggler & Eric AAhkus (20th) and Ian Andrewes & Campbell Rivers (23rd).

Matías Gainza and Fetu Villambrosa won the worlds after an outstanding performance and months of hard training. Pepe Bettini and Maettu Keller, never quitting the quest for gold, finished on the second place.

