

TROISIEME JOURNEE

[Narrow lead for Postma in Finns after black Wednesday](#)

[Major Championships 2011](#)

Pieter Jan Postma (NED) takes a one point lead in the Finns after three testing races at the Finn Gold Cup at the Perth 2011 ISAF Sailing World Championships. Giles Scott (GBR), who won two races, sits one point back, while previous regatta leader Ben Ainslie (GBR) is in third and three third places on Wednesday.

The story of the day was the disqualification of a large number of sailors who picked up black flags in the blue fleet at the start of race three. These included several of the regatta favourites including Ed Wright (GBR), Rafa Trujillo (ESP), Zach Railey (USA) and Ivan Kljakovic Gaspic (CRO).

ITO, Peter Reggio, explained, "It was a very trying day. But the conditions were fantastic. The left was favoured and this is probably why the guys were so eager to take this side and push the start which ended up in several recalls and disqualification. In the first race, four boats were disqualified in the first group and 11 in the second over three attempts to start. Tomorrow, we are starting the finals with a race at 2pm."

It was always going to be a tough day off Fremantle and as the sea breeze filled in and built during the day. The breeze peaking at around 22 -23 knots with a substantial sea forming, and took its toll on the sailors, who spent nearly eight hours on the water and returned exhausted, though happy with a great day's sailing.

In the yellow group, Giles Scott (GBR) immediately took the advantage of the stronger wind and won races three and four. He led most of race five as well, but got



overtaken in the closing stages by Postma. Postma picked up two second places in the first races to end the day one point down on Scott, but it was enough to take the overall lead. Overnight leader Ben Ainslie (GBR) didn't look as dominating as he was in Monday's races and picked up three third places to end the day in third overall.

In the blue group, Jonathan Lobert (FRA) took advantage of the disqualified sailors to record a big win in the first race of the day, followed by Vasilij Zbogar (SLO) and Thomas Le Breton (FRA), and followed that up with a third and second in the races to end the day in fourth overall. Defending world champion Ed Wright (GBR) responded to his black flag disqualification by emphatically winning the next two races by significant margins, with Rafa Trujillo (ESP) picking up a second place and Deniss Karpak (EST) continuing his excellent week with a third.

The sailors didn't get back to the marina until past 18.30, after a very long day on the water, and are glad to have just one race on Thursday.

Though Scott had the best day, he sits in second overnight. "Everything went well today except on the last race when I rounded the wrong mark at the bottom gate and lost a place to second. I had good speed and was able to put some pressure on the early leaders. The first day of racing was frustrating, I had the speed but didn't sail smart. It was good to be fighting it off with PJ."

Postma added, "I had three good races so I am of course really happy, my speed is improving, I got more into the rhythm. I made a mistake on the first race [on Monday] so I have no way out. I have to be careful and watch out. Ben and Giles have no bad races. Tomorrow is the start of the final, but I will do my business as usual, try to take good start, good speed...I am really looking forward to it!"

Winner of race three in the blue group, Lobert said, "I won the first race from start to finish. It was a real opportunity for me that most of the top guys in my fleet were disqualified at the start. I lead to the top mark after winning the start at the pin end and just increased my lead. It is the first time I have won a race in a Finn Gold Cup. It is so exhilarating."

"The left side paid again on the second race. I had Ed and Rafa in front and with the big waves downwind, I couldn't get any advantage. On the upwind legs they are both really fast so I had to keep my third place. I was not really in the regatta the first day, now I am in the game."

Oliver Tweddell (AUS), has been putting in the hours and is currently lying in 25th place after a good start to the regatta. "I have improved since the last Finn Gold Cup in San Francisco. I am pushing myself hard and have bettered my downwind technique. Before I used to lose between 10 and 15 places on the downwind legs. I did lots of training in Melbourne with wind and waves in the sea breeze. I am still learning here, especially the tactics by watching the top guys, and it also makes me realise how much I still have to learn. My objective in this regatta is top 20."

Wright explain his race wins , "In the second race I came in from the right in the end. I got a couple of shifts out to the right and everyone was defending the left so I was quite lucky there. Downwind I extended, so I was happy with that, but I was struggling with the reaching, heading for the wrong mark."

On being careful in the rest of the regatta with an BFD on the scorecard, “We're used it it really. We always have bad ones at some point, so this is no different.”

Another young sailor making his mark is Greg Douglas (CAN), currently in 21st place overall, after two top ten places today. “I had a really good first race today with a fifth. It was windy and that's the way I like it.”

Douglas has been coached by 2008 Olympian Chris Cook (CAN), who is currently in 16th place just seven points ahead of Douglas. “Having him coach was me great. He got me started in the right direction straight away. Since last year I have really improved my fitness and my downwind sailing. Being able to pass boats downwind is a huge advantage.”

“The goal for the week is to beat Chris, but our trials go on to next year, so basically I will try to keep it close and sail my best. But it's really tough out there and with three races it was a long day.”

With five races now completed, the fleet has been split into gold and silver heats for the remaining races. One race will be sailed on Thursday to catch up with the schedule before four more races on Friday and Saturday will decide the top ten to go into Sunday's medal race.

Follow the Finn racing on the class blog at:

http://www.finngoldcup.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2&Itemid=6 which includes the Twitter feeds of many of the sailors racing in Perth. All you need to know in one place.

Results after five races:

- 1 NED 842 Pieter Jan Postma 6
- 2 GBR 41 Giles Scott 7
- 3 GBR 3 Ben Ainslie 8
- 4 FRA 112 Jonathan Lobert 10
- 5 ESP 100 Rafa Trujillo 10
- 6 GBR 11 Ed Wright 12
- 7 EST 2 Denisss Karpak 16
- 8 DEN 2 Jonas Høgh Christensen 19
- 9 USA 4 Zach Railey 20
- 10 CRO 524 Ivan Kljakovic Gaspic 21

Full results so far at:

<http://www.perth2011.com/competition/PERTH2011/SAM002000/results>

Event website: www.perth2012.com

Class website: www.finnclass.org

Class blog: www.finngoldcup.org

Finn Class Twitter: twitter.com/Finn_Class

Finn Class Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Finn-Class/110408332633

Finn Channel on YouTube: www.youtube.com/thefinnchannel

QUATRIEME JOURNEE

Finns keep it tight at the top, and all in order

Major Championships 2011

A single race for Finns on Thursday at the Finn Gold Cup at the Perth 2011 ISAF Sailing World Championships provided few surprises, but some great racing. Pieter Jan Postma (NED) won the race to extend his lead to two points on Giles Scott (GBR), while Ben Ainslie remains in third, another two points back.

The fleet was treated to fantastic conditions once again with sunshine, 14-16 knots of wind and nice waves. Having been split into gold and silver fleets for the next three days, the racing has suddenly become much tougher. It has also shed some light on the country qualification process for the Olympics in 2012. With 18 places available here in Perth, there are 21 nations in the gold fleet, so the race is on to be one of these 18. Three of the 21 will have to try again next year in Falmouth, UK.

In an orderly fashion as is possible, the top three overnight from yesterday all finished in the same order in the top three in the single race in the gold fleet to keep the points close at the top, though they are building a small but significant margin over the rest of the fleet.

Regatta leader Postma led from start to finish. Ainslie rounded the top mark in second with Scott in third. Scott sailed past Ainslie on the downwind and closed on Postma, but the Dutchman kept his cool and his lead and rounded the final windward mark with a narrow lead. Postma and Scott then extended on Ainslie downwind to win by a sizeable margin from the five times champion. Behind them, defending champion Ed Wright (GBR) climbed through the fleet to finish fourth after a poor first upwind.



Postma said, “ It was great to win another race today. With just one race scheduled, I could put all my energy into this race. The British team had a great race, all in the top places. I have a bad race from the first day so I am holding my breath. I still attack though and will keep racing this way. At this high level you just can't relax. You have to go for it. At the same time I have to manage the risks, especially at the start to avoid a disqualification. Tomorrow is no exception, I will keep giving it my all.”

After winning both races on the opening day, Ainslie now has a string of four third places.”It is a real contest on the water with PJ and Giles. They are both really fast. I am a bit lighter than them so especially upwind they are faster than me. I have to try to hang on close to them and wait for them to make a mistake.”

How does the training work between him and the other GBR sailors. “Training with the squad is great. We all realise that training together makes us all better. On the water it is each man for himself. However, this being said I have never had an issue with Giles on the water even when the racing is tight, which is surprising as we often end up in the same area.”

Double European Champion Ivan Kljakovic Gaspic (CRO) has been struggling in the tough conditions, currently in 13th place after finishing 14th today. “It's been really windy so far and for me it's not easy as I am pretty light, so I was struggling. And today I had a really bad start so had to recover from behind and it wasn't that easy. Almost impossible in fact. For the moment it not the sweetest point but, let's hope for better in the coming days”

“It's hard to be with the fast guys especially in this wind. But this event is not that important for me. I just need to qualify the country for the Olympics and after this I can relax and focus on that. I am aware that fighting for medal here is difficult for me, so I just need to be realistic.”

On the battle at the top he said,, “They are close but it all depends on the conditions. If it remains like this I think PJ has a stronger chance because he is super fast but if wind starts to gets changeable and shifty then I think Ben and Giles are going to be fighting for the gold.”

Among the familiar faces in Perth is three times Olympian Anthony Nossiter (AUS) who just could couldn't miss the opportunity to sail a Finn Gold Cup in his home country. Down in 26th place he is having a tough time, but enjoying every moment. “It's good to be back, but it's tough being a tourist. It's such hard work. I rounded the top mark about 10th today but ended up about 20th as the race went on. But it's good to keep your Olympic class skills. And it's good fun. There's no sailing better than sailing a Finn. I'll be a Master in two years so I am looking forward to that and going up against the Big Czech [Mike Maier].”

In the silver fleet Brendan Wilton (CAN) had a fantastic race, leading from start to finish, loving the breezy conditions; some consolation perhaps for bad luck and gear failure on Wednesday which probably cost him a place in the gold fleet. Timo Haggort (NED) was second with Martin Robitaille (CAN) in third.

Wilton explained, “The key to today was definitely my upwind speed. After the start I had great speed and height and it opened up all my options. There were only small shifts so after I rounded ahead I knew that I could control the rest of the race. The Estonian Lauri [Vainsalu] was going great on the first downwind and he rounded right behind me at the bottom mark. Then I gained again upwind.”

“It feels awesome to win the race. Yesterday I was a little bit down after some breakages and a black flag so, coming back and winning a race feels good for sure. I definitely expected to be in the gold fleet here, after a top 30 would have been great, after coming 38th last year in San Francisco.”

Together with the rest of the Canadian team, Wilton has been preparing for a windy series. “For the last two years with San Francisco being a breezy event and this year and then Falmouth expected to be breezy, we have been trying to train in windy conditions.” Clearly that paid off today for Wilton and Robitaille.

The last word today goes to the Skandia Team GBR coach Matt Howard, “ We had five in the top seven today and so far so good. It reflects the long amount of time spent here training with the squad. The only one who didn't train this long is Ed but he is the World Champion from a windy venue so he is expected to do well as well. We all worked hard and so far it is paying off. Fingers crossed for the rest of the week. It is surely very satisfying for a coach but these results are even more satisfying when you are a sailor. For a coach though, it is hard to have a fully good day because in a big team there is always one of the guys who didn't perform so well. Today is one of those very rare days when everything works well.”

The Finn fleet is now back on schedule, with six races completed and five to go. Racing continues Friday and Saturday with two more races for each fleet each day in the finals series, before the medal race for the top 10 on Sunday.

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http://www.finngoldcup.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2&Itemid=6 which includes the Twitter feeds of many of the sailors racing in Perth. All you need to know in one place.

Results after six races:

- 1 NED 842 Pieter Jan Postma 7
- 2 GBR 41 Giles Scott 9
- 3 GBR 3 Ben Ainslie 11
- 4 FRA 112 Jonathan Lobert 15
- 5 GBR 11 Ed Wright 16
- 6 EST 2 Denisss Karpak 22
- 7 DEN 2 Jonas Høgh Christensen 26
- 8 ESP 100 Rafa Trujillo 28.5
- 9 GBR 85 Andrew Mills 29
- 10 FRA 29 Thomas Le Breton 34

Full results so far at:

<http://www.perth2011.com/competition/PERTH2011/SAM002000/results>

CINQUIEME JOURNEE

[Ainslie back on top as leaders collect points](#)

[Major Championships 2011](#)

Ben Ainslie (GBR) is back on top at the Finn Gold Cup at the Perth 2011 ISAF Sailing World Championships after another incredible display of consistency and skill. The five time Finn world champion now has a two point lead from Giles Scott (GBR) while overnight leader Pieter Jan Postma (NED) slips to third another five points back.

Friday was always going to be the day of reckoning for the Finn fleet with the first full day of finals racing. While no one in the top ten had yet lost the championship, no one had also yet won it. Today the gaps got wider as a number of boats in the top 10 picked up some relatively high scores and delivered a little bit more clarity to the picture.

The wind gradually built during the day with 10-12 knots at the start of race seven, building to 15-16 knots by the end of race eight.

The early leader in race seven was Tapio Nirkko (FIN), leading round the top mark from Jonas Hoegh Christensen (DEN) and Ainslie. Ainslie slipped past both of them on the first reach to lead down the run and was never headed, extending on each and every leg to win by a 30 second margin. Behind him Nirkko held on to second for a long time, but the defending world champion, put the throttle down on the final downwind to move up to second. Nirkko crossed in third.

Ainslie's main rivals finished deeper than they would have wanted. Postma recovered to fifth while Scott recovered to 10th. Ainslie's comment yesterday about keeping close and waiting for them to make a mistake happened sooner than any of them expected.



In race eight Scott made amends by leading all the way round for his third win of the week. He rounded the top mark ahead of Wright, Rafa Trujillo (ESP), and Ainslie. With the wind increasing it turned into a tough slog with the British sailors gradually working their way to the front. Scott led Ainslie and Wright in from the left on the second beat and with Andrew Mills (GBR) also passing Trujillo, it was a British top four at the finish. Ainslie actually closed up on Scott on the final downwind for a very close finish.

Ainslie said, "It was a tough day out there, but I managed two good races. I was more consistent than PJ and Giles. PJ did struggle a bit in the second race and Giles placed 10th in the first. That's good for me because I needed another really good day."

"When you are a good sailor, people expect you to be winning all the time and it put a lot of pressure on you. Some of the sailors out there are really hard to beat, the quality of the fleet is high and winning is never easy. With the free pumping, sailing downwind is often brutal. Sometimes I can imagine what it might be to be a rower. When you are racing, it is just amazing that you can keep pushing yourself so hard."

Looking ahead to Saturday, he said, "Sailing tomorrow on Centre course will be interesting. I need another good race before going into the medal race."

Postma reflected on his day, "My first start was good but not great. And the level is so high here, it has to be great to be able to win. In the second race I was on the left hand side of the start line and I was expecting the wind to come back to the left."

"I feel that Ben has a bit more confidence in his performance and his speed. He is more consistent. Our speed upwind is very similar. But today he made the least mistakes of all. Last year at the worlds I was 20th, and now I have last year's world champion behind me and Ben and Giles ahead. I have made a lot of progress. I am doing very well, and the best thing is that we know exactly what we are doing."

"There are three more races to go and a lot is possible. I already have silver from the last ISAF Worlds in 2007, so there is everything still to play for."

Several sailors had better day today. After an inconsistent start Tapio Nirrko is improving. He said, "I started second boat up from the pin from Ben and straight away went under him to find a fresh lane for myself. Then I went pretty to the left and kept it simple. The left was paying again so it was easy. I had the same strategy for the second race but the wind went more right and in the end it was OK, but I was also over the layline, so that didn't help. I did what I could to save it but I am happy with 15th."

"The week so far hasn't been great for me. But I hope I turned the corner a little bit yesterday. Yesterday was OK for me and today I am quite happy with my performance."

Ionnis Mitakis (GRE), a twice winner of the Junior European Championship, also had a better day. "I had two good races today, an 11th and an eighth which is good in the Gold fleet. It was quite windy again so that makes it tougher. Today I tried to hike more and it paid off."

Meanwhile last year's top Junior at the Finn Gold Cup, Caleb Paine (USA), had a great race eight to place 10th. He said, "At this point the regatta has not gone too well for me. I have had

some problems with my set up, and I am just starting to get it together. It's a bit late in the game, but I am still learning so it's not a problem.”

“I had a good start in the second race today and boat end was pretty favoured and that's where I was. I took one hitch out for about two minutes and stayed in clear air and rounded the top mark about eighth.”

He explained his strategy, “ Once you are out in the front it's a lot easier staying there than being at the back and trying to get back through. You have to think about the risk factor in everything you do. If you are up at the front and maybe see and see an opportunity to make a gain, and it won't hurt you, then you obviously want to take it, maybe getting a bit more leverage out to the side, but you also have the flip side if you go too far then you risk losing out on other boats. So it's all about managing the risk.”

Greg Douglas (CAN) and Oliver Tweddell (AUS) are top Juniors this year in 23rd and 24th places. The ISAF World championship does not recognise the Junior categories and with entries limited, the Finn class has introduced the Silver Cup to allow sailors under 21 to compete without restriction during ISAF World's year. There are 11 junior Finn sailors competing in Fremantle with youngest Jorge Zarif (BRA). The 19 year old is fighting hard in 29th place and 17th nation (the top 18 will gain selection) with his main goal to select Brazil and himself for the London Games.

In the silver fleet today race wins went to Brendan Wilton (CAN) and Alexey Selivanov (RUS), while Tomas Vika (CZE) picked up two second places to lead the fleet into its final day of racing on Saturday.

Saturday will also be the last chance for the top 18 nations to win a berth at the 2012 Olympic Games. After eight races Eduard Skorniyakov (RUS), in 33rd position, is holding the last spot. He is closely trailed by Jan Kurfeld (GER), Lei Gong (CHN) and four times Olympian, Michael Maier (CZE). Only 14 points separate these three countries from the Russian who will need to hold his ground in Saturday two races to ensure his country qualification.

Saturday's final two gold fleet races are being held on the Centre course area, and with shorter courses, and maybe more laps, this should add a new element to the mix, and provide a thrilling conclusion for the fleet series before Sunday's medal race. Gold fleet races start from 14.30, while Silver fleet are racing on a different course from 14.50.

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Results after eight races:

- 1 GBR 3 Ben Ainslie 14
- 2 GBR 41 Giles Scott 16
- 3 NED 842 Pieter Jan Postma 21
- 4 GBR 11 Ed Wright 21
- 5 FRA 112 Jonathan Lobert 37

6 ESP 100 Rafa Trujillo 40
7 GBR 85 Andrew Mills 41
8 DEN 2 Jonas Høgh Christensen 42
9 EST 2 Denis Karpak 49
10 USA 4 Zach Railey 54

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Event website: www.perth2012.com

Class website: www.finnclass.org

Class blog: www.finngoldcup.org

Finn Class Twitter: twitter.com/Finn_Class

Finn Class Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Finn-Class/110408332633

Finn Channel on YouTube: www.youtube.com/thefinnchannel

SIXIEME JOURNEE

Finn rock stars play to the stadium

Major Championships 2011

It was a day of stadium racing for the rock stars of the Finn class in Fremantle, at the Finn Gold Cup at the Perth 2011 ISAF Sailing World Championships, with two gold fleet races sailed just off a grandstand, which was almost filled to capacity with action hungry spectators. They got far more action than they expected.

After regatta leader Ben Ainslie (GBR) was disqualified from both races today under a Rule 69 hearing, Giles Scott (GBR) takes a two point lead from Pieter Jan Postma (NED) and a nine point lead from defending world champion Ed Wright (GBR) into Sunday's deciding medal race.

As well as being a controversial day, it was also a scorching hot day with a solid sea breeze building around midday to reach 16-18 knots by the time the Finns started. It was ideal conditions for some full on Finn racing, right in front of a willing audience.

For the first time this week the Finns were racing on the Centre course, with the grandstand viewing platform next to the massive PERTH sign, and a confined leeward gate to give the spectators there, and on the beach in Bathers Bay, the best view of the racing. There was also a new course configuration, with three windward-leeward loops with a final dog leg to the finish.

After losing the overall lead on Friday, Pieter Jan Postma (NED) needed to do something special today to close the gap on the leaders. Race nine start after a general recall with a lot of river sailing tactics called into play as the fleet played the left side of the course, tacking, and calling for water to tack, near the sea wall. Postma emerged to round the top mark just ahead of regatta leader Ben Ainslie (GBR) and Jonas Hoegh Christensen (DEN) close behind.



Postma and Ainslie battled tooth and nail throughout with Ainslie closing up on the third beat. However Postma proved faster downwind and won his fourth race of the week, while Giles Scott (GBR) moved through the fleet from around eighth at the top mark to third at the finish.

After crossing the finish line, Ainslie boarded a camera boat after almost being swamped by its wake during the final leg and had an animated discussion with some of the crew before diving out to rejoin his Finn. Ainslie said, "On the final downwind leg of the race, I was hindered by a media boat, the actions of which I felt were seriously impeding my progress in the race." Though apologies were later offered from both sides, a Rule 69 protest hearing was held and Ainslie was disqualified from both the day's races. This has dropped him out of the medal race.

After another general recall, race ten started under a black flag. Unbeknown to Ainslie, he was its only victim, but carried on sailing unaware of the penalty. His plan seemed clear before the start and he sat on Postma throughout the race to push him as deep as possible.

Tapio Nirkko (FIN) emerged as the early leader in the race but dropped back after the first lap. Eventually Rafa Trujillo (ESP) broke through to the front and held on for his second win of the regatta. Hoegh Christensen was having another great race but lost second place to Zach Railey (USA) on the final downwind.

A capsize for Ivan Kljakovic Gaspic (CRO) on the final downwind not only cost him a broken mast tip, but also, at the time, had lost him enough points to slip to 11th overall, which meant that Deniss Karpak (EST) filled the final slot in the top ten for Sunday's medal race. However, with Ainslie's double disqualification which cannot be discarded, the Croatian is back in the medal race.

Trujillo said, "In the first race I went swimming at the bottom mark. I slipped in the boat and when I was about sixth. But I am really happy after a difficult day as in the second race I had a good motivation to do a good race to finish the championship. It was one to one downwind, borderline capsizing but I am happy that I won. It was nice out there. I think it was a good show for everyone."

Former double world champion Hoegh Christensen also had a good day. "I am not that happy with my week but I am happy with today. A fourth and a third is a good day. I had a chance to win the second race but on one downwind Rafa came down with big pressure on the inside and I was on the outside and lost about seven boats. I fought my way back up to second at the windward mark, but Zach managed to pass me on the last downwind, but it was all good."

The new overall leader Scott had another up and down day. "I rounded deep in the first race, about 15th, and had a good first downwind. I worked my way through and found myself in third which was good, and then the second one was not good. I got caught in the 20 boats fight along the sea wall and didn't come out of that very well."

"People were calling for water and you'd tack back again and it got a bit tricky. It was a bit like river racing. For the medal race it think its OK but for 40 boats trying to race in such a small tight area, it was a bit marginal at times. And then there was the helicopter. It came a bit close and I saw all the water flying up in the air and PJ was sailing straight towards it. I really thought he was going to capsize. It was way to low and directly over where you were going."

On Sunday's medal race, "It's quite tight at the top so I am sure that will be a spectacle tomorrow. I will have to look at the points tonight and decide what the plan is."

Railey said of his day "It was a much better day for me today. I was a little frustrated in the first race. I was in 9th and lost a couple on the downwind, but then I corrected what I was doing wrong in the second race and was able to pass a few boats from seventh at the first mark to second at the finish. All the boats I passed were on the downwind, so it was just an adjustment I made from the first race."

"So I made the top ten and that was the goal going into today. It feels good as Olympic qualification is all done now. Today was definitely different to where we were racing all week. It was very, very favoured on the left hand side of the course and having the sea wall come into play created a lot of different situations, with rules and stuff and when to tack, which was very interesting. There were a lot of situations out on the course, with close racing, right in front of the stand so I think they got a good show today, that's for sure."

The end of the gold fleet today also marked the end of the first stage of qualification for countries for next year's Olympic Games. Nothing much changed after today's races, with Australia, Brazil, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Russia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine and the USA filling the first 18 slots.

Jorge Zarif (BRA) said, "At the end of the race I heard people shouting from the grandstand but I didn't realise it was for me. Then I came closer and saw all the Brazilian team cheering up for me. Now I understand why...I had just selected Brazil for the Olympics in the Finn. This is good. Now I have to win the trials. I win one point here for qualifying the country, I need to win the trials in Buzios in January. If I don't then it will be the first Brazilian in Palma."

"Now I need to work more on the fitness and at the gym. I am young and can't put on muscle so easily. Then I have to train my downwind technique. In January we will have some guys coming to train in Brazil. Then I will come to Europe for the Europeans and Palma."

The 18th and final slot went to Russia, with 2007 European Champion Eduard Skornyakov (RUS) securing the place. He said, "Now we have qualified the country, our sailor selection is simple. Whoever is the first Russian sailor in Falmouth next year gets to go to the Olympics." The Finn Gold Cup in Falmouth, UK in May is the second and final Olympic qualification event, where the last six places will be determined.

In the silver fleet today, racing on a separate offshore course, race wins went to Tomas Vika (CZE) and Brendan Wilton (CAN). Vika was the top sailors in the fleet with Timo Haggort (NED) and Lauri Vainsalu (EST) some way behind.

The medal race is scheduled to start at 16.10 on Sunday, the last of four medal races scheduled and perhaps the one that everyone has been waiting for. With Ainslie out, the field is wide open. Scott has a two point lead over Postma and sits just nine points ahead of defending champion Ed Wright. While only the top three can wind gold, the next three sailors – Hoegh Christensen, Trujillo and Jonathan Lobert (FRA) - are all within reach of bronze. It is going to be some show.

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- 7 GBR 85 Andrew Mills 67
- 8 USA 4 Zach Railey 68
- 9 EST 2 Denis Karpak 76
- 10 CRO 524 Ivan Kljakovic Gaspic 81

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<http://www.perth2011.com/competition/PERTH2011/SAM002000/results>

Event website: www.perth2012.com

Class website: www.finnclass.org

Class blog: www.finngoldcup.org

Finn Class Twitter: twitter.com/Finn_Class

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DERNIERE JOURNEE : MEDAL RACE

High emotion as Scott seals first Finn Gold Cup

Major Championships 2011

The Finn medal race at the Finn Gold Cup at the Perth 2011 ISAF Sailing World Championship was a fantastic finale of the first week of competition in Fremantle, and it didn't disappoint. With three sailors capable of winning the coveted title and three more capable of snatching bronze, it was an enthralling and exciting contest with a thrilling ending.

Giles Scott (GBR) took the title in the closing stages by just one point from Pieter Jan Postma (NED, who led the race from start to finish. Defending World Champion Ed Wright (GBR) had to settle for the bronze medal.

Sailed in a fitful sea breeze, Oscar flag was only raised at the second windward mark as the breeze topped 10 knots. Postma dominated the race from the start, winning the pin end and protecting the left side to round the top mark ahead of Jonas Hoegh Christensen (DEN) and Scott. Hoegh Christensen briefly took the lead in more pressure close to the sea wall on the first downwind but Postma just broke the overlap at the leeward gate and from there on extended to lead throughout.

Scott was close on the Dane's heels throughout and at the final top mark had closed the gap enough to be confident in his downwind speed to the finish. Scott went wider, and surfed through to the lead as the fleet passed in front of the cheering grandstand, and was closing on Postma towards the finish. But second place in the race was enough to take the Finn Gold Cup for the first time.

Both sailors held their head in the hands after the finish and were clearly emotional. Postma had picked up another silver and for Scott, the realisation that even as European and world



champion, he would still not be going to the Olympics. For him it remains a hard pill to swallow.

Meanwhile, defending champion Ed Wright didn't have such a good day. At one point he was in last place but climbed to fifth by the finish to take the bronze.

After winning the Europeans in Helsinki this summer, Scott had said he had felt "total relief". Asked the same question again today, he said, "The same, but more so. I don't really know why. Probably because it's the worlds. But when I crossed the line I was a bit of mess to be honest. And it was a really weird feeling. There's five years to go to the next Olympics for me, though I am not really sure I have thought about it too much."

On today's race he said, "I made things difficult for myself today. PJ did a brilliant job, as he has done all week, of getting off the pin end of the start line and getting the first shift right and he has almost led every race to the top mark, so as soon as I saw him do that I knew I had a bit on. I was just thankful that I rounded so well."

On catching Hoegh Christensen on the final downwind, "I thought that if I got round on his tail I had a decent chance of taking his wind and surf over the top of him. Fortunately I was able to do that. Jonas did well on the first downwind coming into the wall and I thought he'd end up in the lead so was quite surprised when PJ got water at the mark, and that made things a bit more difficult for me as well."

Asked to describe the event in three words, the only word Scott could come up with was, "Emotional, really emotional. Rafa came over to me earlier and gave me a hug and said welcome to the Finn Gold Cup Club It's quite funny but it's great to be a part of that."

Wright commented on the race, "Today was harder: lighter and more shifty. I made some mistakes. I probably was a bit too much confident. At the start I was too eager, so I made a show for the public," he joked. "I crossed the line, was clearly over and came back. I thought my first beat was good and that I had gained some places but the racing was so tight that I was last at the top mark. It was good racing, very close and tricky, it took me the full three laps to catch up."

You have to feel for Postma. After picking up a silver in 2007, many thought he was a real threat this year and lost again by the smallest of margins, after dominating the medal race, his fifth race win of the week. "I missed the title by a point and it is hard, but I gave it all and more importantly I have greatly enjoyed the process. The racing was fantastic and fun, and that's the most important part. Giles had a better preparation than me, and is benefiting from a good programme. Working with the British Finn squad is a real advantage as he is always training with the top four guys in the world. They push each other constantly. The British are a step ahead."

About racing in front of the crowd on Centre Course, "I loved it. The supporters cheering during the racing are bringing lots of positive energy. It makes sailing more lively even if I stay focussed on what I am doing!"

So there is a new name on one of the most hard to win trophies in the sport of sailing. At the medal ceremony at the World's Village, the Finn Gold Cup was presented to Giles Scott by Finn class legend John Bertrand.

The fleet reconvenes in just five months time for the next Finn Gold Cup at Falmouth in the UK, the home waters of Ben Ainslie, so that is going to be really interesting.

Follow the Finn racing on the class blog again at:

http://www.finngoldcup.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2&Itemid=6

which includes the Twitter feeds of many of the sailors racing in Perth. All you need to know in one place.

Results after medal race (medal race results in brackets):

- 1 GBR 41 Giles Scott 30 (2)
- 2 NED 842 Pieter Jan Postma 31 (1)
- 3 GBR 11 Ed Wright 45 (5)
- 4 DEN 2 Jonas Høgh Christensen 54 (3)
- 5 ESP 100 Rafa Trujillo 65 (8)
- 6 FRA 112 Jonathan Lobert 70 (9)
- 7 GBR 85 Andrew Mills 81 (7)
- 8 EST 2 Denis Karpak 84 (4)
- 9 USA 4 Zach Railey 88 (10)
- 10 CRO 524 Ivan Kljakovic Gaspic 93 (6)

Full results at: <http://www.perth2011.com/competition/PERTH2011/SAM002000/results>

Event website: www.perth2012.com

Class website: www.finnclass.org

Class blog: www.finngoldcup.org

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