

International Finn Association Press Release 42ème Semaine Olympique Française - Hyères

Day six – Friday 29 April

Fifth is enough for Misura to win Finns in Hyeres

After another thrilling Finn medal race, Marin Misura (CRO) emerged as the winner of the 42nd SOF Hyeres after defending his narrow lead over last year's winner Ivan Kljakovic Gaspic (CRO).

True to form this week, the start of the medal races was delayed to allow time for the wind to build and stabilise. Two breezes were again fighting each other with windless patches meandering all over the course as the left breeze would phase in, followed by the right breeze.

The odds were good that the Hyeres Finn title would go to Croatia this year and so it was. Marin Misura and Ivan Kljakovic Gaspic started just two points apart – which in the double scoring medal race is just one place – so whoever beat the other would most likely take the week, providing they were not at the back of the fleet.

Out of the start, Kljakovic Gaspic looked to be in control and was leading the fleet to the right with Misura a safe 20 boatlengths or so behind. Unfortunately that wasn't enough protection in these conditions as Kljakovic Gaspic fell into a hole, while Misura lifted off with pressure from the left to gain the advantage.

At the top mark, Jonathan Lobert (FRA) had profited most from the last left shift to lead round, followed by Misura, Rafal Szukiel (POL) and then Kljakovic Gaspic. On the second beat, Misura clamped mercilessly onto Kljakovic Gaspic as they began an epic tacking duel heading out to the right side while the rest of the fleet worked left. After about 20 tacks, Kljakovic Gaspic picked up a yellow flag from the jury for an extra rock out of a tack. He did his turns but then trailed at a distance.

Lobert led for the remainder of the race to win comfortably; his second of the week. Team mate Thomas Le Breton (FRA) was never too far behind with Szukiel and Ed Wright (GBR) also in contention.

There was real drama on the finish line as Le Breton pipped Szukiel by less than a metre to take second place in the race and the regatta as he had just put enough boats between himself and Kljakovic Gaspic to take the Silver medal overall, knocking the Croatian into third place. However Kljakovic Gaspic also picked up a third yellow flag to score DNE.

Misura crossed the line in fifth place to win the week by eight points from Le Breton. Le Breton said of his first major regatta podium place, “It was good here to be fast, and I think I was in these light conditions. I was surprised to have the whole week with calm seas in Hyeres. We are all now looking forward to hiking again.”

For Misura this win couldn't have come at a better time. Missing out on selection to the 2008 Olympics to Kljakovic Gaspic, this win will be a great boost to his campaign for 2012, and perhaps marks the start of another epic battle for selection that the Finn class has been so famous for over the years.

Misura said, "I got a bit lucky with the wind direction and being so shifty, then when I was ahead I knew I had to stay close to him [Kljakovic Gaspic]."

In just over a week's time the fleet will reassemble in Misura's home town of Split in Croatia for the Senior and Junior European Championships, which this year has attracted a record 102 pre-entries. Everyone is upping their game at the moment, and winning is getting harder than ever with lots of new names starting to make an appearance at the front - it would be a very hard call to predict a favourite at this stage. So watch this space - it's going to be a great fight.

Final results (top 10 out of 52 entries)

1	CRO 25	Marin MISURA	44
2	FRA 115	Thomas LE BRETON	52
3	CRO 524	Ivan KLJAKOVIC GASPIC	58
4	FRA 112	Jonathan LOBERT	61
5	SLO 5	Gasper VINCEC	62
6	GBR 11	Edward WRIGHT	64
7	POL 7	Rafal SZUKIEL	75
8	ESP 100	Rafael TRUJILLO	93
9	USA 4	Zach RAILEY	97
10	RUS 9	Eduard SKORNYAKOV	101

Event website: <http://sof.ffvoile.net>

Class website: www.finnclass.org

Class video site: www.youtube.com/thefinnchannel

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