

SB20 World Championships, 19 - 25 October 2019 COYCH, Hyères FRANCE

New SB20 World Champion 2019 was crowned in Hyères last Friday! After 8 races and 4 challenging days team “Give Me Five” of Robin Follin, Emeric Michel, Gauthier Germain and Laurie Candela claimed the title, for the second time since 2015.

The event gathered 65 boats from 14 countries and was one of the largest one-design *sportsboat* championships in Europe this year that gathered a solid number of top sailors.



Robin Follin commented on the last day of racing:

“It’s a really good achievement, and it’s great to do it in Hyères because it’s our best place for sailing! We did all our SB20 training since 2014 here. And for me it is also special because I won my first Optimist competition here, so it’s a lot of good memories. Also with all the family and friends here, it’s was just great. The team did a great job, thanks to Gauthier, Emeric and Laurie who were at the maximum!”

The week consisted of four sailing days with one day off due to heavy storm that hit Hyères on Tuesday. The Race Committee has made a great move with shifting the racing early that day to manage one race. Some breakages happened across the fleet, but everyone was safe and the sailors got some action after a slow start on Day 1. With only two races done by the end of Wednesday the Principal Race Officer Natalie Peberel was under pressure to make this championship constitute for the series, for which minimum three races were required.

On Thursday sailing started well after lunch with no wind in the morning after the storm, but a promise for some breeze in the afternoon. The fleet spent a few hours waiting ashore before they got four tricky races, that finished in a beautiful sunset on Hyères bay.

“My goal was to be Top 10 and we’re well inside that” - said Andrew Smith, skipper of The Imp after that long day. - “Beautiful breeze from the shore and - compared to the other two days - quite flat water. The wind was very shifty and changing quickly from left to right, so it was a very tactical day. Getting off the start line in good shape was really important. We have a great team - David Chapman, who’s calling tactics, and Lewis [Noye] is very capable as well, so they work very well together. It’s a very strong fleet here”.

Overall third placed “The Imp” belongs to skipper Andrew Smith, who sailed his third SB20 Worlds. They have sailed probably most consistently here in Hyère among all Australians, who were present with four teams at this event. They managed to finish the regatta without any black flags or other disqualifications and with 14 points ahead of the next team. Andrew’s experience as a sailor counts with sailing dinghies back in the days followed by several Sydney Hobarts and lots of regattas out of Tasmania. Tactician - David Chapman is the current SB20 Australian National Champion, having won in 2018 on Michael Cooper’s Export Roo. Lewis Noye has already competed in two World Championships as a crew and won the Tasmanian Youth SB20 Championship.

Artem Basalkin, owner and tactician of B-team, who finished the Worlds in second place, told us after the Championship a little bit about B-team (“B” stands for Basalkin), that he was supposed to come to the Worlds with another project, but that hadn’t worked out and back in June he decided to make his own team. With a couple of boats back in Russia, where Artem coaches several teams, he just needed a crew and Alexey Lesnikov turned up right in time after sailing SB20 back in St. Petersburg for the last 4 years as a trimmer. It was decided that he will go on the helm and that has worked out very well, leading them to win the Russian National Championship back in September. Two other trimmers onboard are Artem’s wife Yana Basalkina and a Youth 470 sailor from Sevastopol - Andrey Tukalov. Their next big ambition was to win in Hyères and after a busy summer training they ended up second at the Worlds!

“I’ve competed in Hyères 8 or 9 times in Olympic Classes (470 and 49er) and four times in SB20,” - said Artem, “so I had enough time to learn the patterns of the bay. Yes, we didn’t get that classic Mistral last week, but I think it was a great championship. The Eastern wind here gives this rough chop on the water, which is very similar to what we get back home in St. Petersburg and we like it”.

The rest of the 65-strong fleet finished in various places. With only 4 racing days that didn’t allow more competition and made sailors wait ashore more than compete on the water in the first three days the results of some of the great sailors are scattered along the list. You would have expected a stronger competition from last year’s champion Skoczek, but they had two unfortunate days with boat damage and one UFD. Gab was sailing with a new crew this time, as his last year’s World Champion partner Achille Nebout is currently starting the Transat Jacques Vabre.

You would have expected to see New Territories, the 2016 World Champion, to be positioned higher, but got two disqualifications and despite the discard and winning one race only made it to the top 10. Local Olympic Laser star Jean Baptiste Bernaz finished 13th having got an unfortunate BFD in the last race with one second finish on windy Day 2. He sailed a family regatta celebrating his father Laurent’s 60th anniversary. Further down

the list the teams represented some really strong sailors in their own countries - National Champions and experienced SB20 owners - who did get some top places during the week, but the variety of sailing conditions, the pressure and the stress, plus some mistakes on shifty days made some of them finish outside of Top 20.

Interesting event in terms of weather and as ever COYCH delivered some incredible racing, thanks to PRO Natalie Peberel and the team of international Umpires, the Jury and local volunteers squad. Once again the SB20 Class has gathered a number of renowned sailors for another fantastic event!

Useful links

Daily photography:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1bTidEpHbMY-8LMctKzHIP4vrORamAgv?usp=sharing>

Final Results:

<https://www.sb20hyeres2019.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/sb20-worlds-2019-overall-day05-after-jury.htm>

SB20 Class Facebook page with some Live interviews and updates:

<https://www.facebook.com/SB20Class/>

@SB20class Instagram for Stories highlight - SB20Worlds2019:

<https://www.instagram.com/sb20class/>