

2015 SB20 World Championships - Final day

by True Angle on 13 Jul 2015

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2015 SB20 World Championships - Final day. Image Credits: Jurij Plavnik/Circolo Vela Torbole/SB20 Class SB20 Class Association/Sportsboat World

2015 SB20 World Championship - The fifth and final day of the Trentino SB20 World Championships (Friday, 10 July 2015), opened with three boats still in the running to seize the championship title.

Leaders 'Give Me 5 by FFV Youth', skippered by Robin Follin, went into Race 13 on 27 points and an 11-point advantage over second-placed Roger Hudson's 'Race Ahead – Spirit of Cape Town'. Rodion Luka's Ukrainian 'Skyline' team were in third, with Robert Jeffreys and Glenn Bourke (AUS) in fourth.

The SB20 fleet enjoyed a week of stunning conditions sailing from the Circolo Vela Torbole on Lake Garda from July 4-10 and the final day provided typically spectacular conditions with the penultimate race held in a building Ora breeze, and the last in full-on downwind planing conditions.

Things got off to an intriguing start, when the leading FFV team finished mid-fleet with a 14th. Meanwhile the South African 'Race Ahead' team gambled on a pin-end start, but were early at the line. Hudson and crew had to gybe out, but struggled to find a lane back and were nearly last at the windward mark. They eventually finished 24th in the first race, which was won by Ian Ainslie – his third win of the regatta. Second place went to Glenn Bourke. Rodion Luka took fifth, which just nudged the Ukrainian team into second overall going into the event's final start.

In the final race of the competition many of the main title contenders headed towards the cliffs off the line, away from the stronger breeze on the right, whilst a late shift saw the leaders having to fight their way back through the pack. Rodion Luka was mid-fleet on the second lap, eventually pulling his way up to ninth. The 'Race Ahead' team again went for a pin-end start, but were forced over the line and found themselves DSQ, ending their challenge for the championship.



2015 SB20 World Championships - Final day. Image Credits: Juriy Plavnik/Circolo Vela Torbole/SB20 Class SB20 Class Association/Sportsboat World

Meanwhile the young French team made their move midway through Race two and, showing excellent speed in the building breeze together with smart positioning, picked their way through the pack to finish fourth. With Luka and the 'Skyline' team behind them, they were able to conservatively sail a safe last run to the finish and take the title with 45 points to Luka's 55 points. Robert Jeffreys and Glenn Bourke finished 10th to take the final podium position.

A surprised and delighted Follin said after racing: "We did not really have in mind that we could possibly win this. The standard of competition, the depth of talent, the former champions, the Olympic medallists... all made it seem

impossible that we could even dream of winning. We still cannot believe it.” The winning FFV team includes Marine Boudot and Emeric Michel, with crew aged between 19 and 26 years.

Follin and the FFV team raised the Trentino SB20 World Championship glass trophy at a popular prizegiving after racing, also taking the Youth category prize. Other prizewinners included Glenn Bourke, whose crew won the Master’s category sponsored by Hyde Sails, and Roger Harford (GBR 3096), who won the Sportboat World prize for the oldest crew. Richard Powell (GBR 3728, 11th), won the Circolo Vela Torbole Concourse prize. Helene Urrutti and her ‘Oceanteam Solutions’ team from Cannes took the Women’s category prize, sponsored by Clarins.

In the Silver Fleet Vladislaav Ivanovskiy and team from St Petersburg took the win, 10 points ahead of Ger Dempsey’s team from Ireland, Ivanovskiy and crew were awarded the Sportsboat World-sponsored prizes for first Silver fleet team.



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After racing, there were frantic calculations to work out who had won the highly anticipated 'Nations Cup' prize, sponsored by Sportsboat World, which stirred up plenty of competition with seven nations competing for the top spot and the 13 countries represented at the championships. Russia eventually just edged the trophy with two boats in the top 10, which also included top entries from Ukraine, Australia, South Africa, Britain and of course France. There was just one point separating the top three teams, so closely matched are the national fleets in this 20-foot keelboat class.

The fleet were unanimous in their praise of host club Circolo Vela Torbole, and Race Committee President, Carmelo Paroli, for the successful management of both a qualifying and final series for two fleets on a trapezoidal course.

The SB20 fleet is now looking forward to the 2016 World Championship in Cascais, Portugal in late August, before the 2017 World Championship, hosted by the prestigious Royal Yacht Squadron in Cowes, UK. There will also be an Asia Pacific Championships and the Inaugural Asian Grand Slam, hosted by Singapore in early 2016. The Tasmania fleet is currently among the favourites to host the 2018 World Championships, which would see a return to the Southern Hemisphere after the 2012 Worlds in Hamilton Island, Australia.