

Salerno Youth Race Week - Full Story w/Team Updates July 2003

Hey Everyone,

Here are the updates and story on the 2003 Salerno Youth Race Week - direct comments from our young sailors are below the line:

Who/What/Where/When: This was a major sailing event (ISAF Grade 3) hosted by Circle Canottieri Irno, a sailing club in Salerno, Italy from July 2nd through July 5th. It was an invitational-only (qualify by resume) International Match-Race event for competitors (teams of 3) under the age of 25.

The entry representing the USA was: Helmsman: **Scott DeCurtis**, Middle-Man: **Brian Angel**, Bowman: **Steve Brown**. (all members of King Harbor Yacht Club in Redondo Beach, CA). There were eight top-notch competitors from around the globe. (5 countries represented: USA, GER, England, ITA, JPN). Going into the event, Scott DeCurtis was ranked 132nd in the world with five of the eight competitors at this regatta being ranked higher. Sponsors of the American team were: King Harbor Yacht Club (KHYC), King Harbor Youth Foundation (KHYP), California International Sailing Association (CISA) and Santa Monica Bay Sailing Foundation (SMBSF).

After a LONG trip (planes, trains and automobiles) our team arrived in Salerno, June 30th. The regatta began on July 2nd They had two days to adjust to: Time change, diet, different boats, totally new sailing venue and. OH YEAH, a different language!

Day 2 Update: Sorry we didn't get to you sooner, but we haven't been able to find an internet station until today. Things are going very well. We are a solid 5-0 with 2 races left in the round robin, locking us into the semi's, with most of the tough teams behind us. We still have to race the Finland team who is 4-1, but they don't look too tough. Our strength has definitely been our speed upwind and our tacks. Our starts have been not up to our best performance, but only one has truly been bad. We are not sailing J22's as it turns out, which I believe has been a major factor in our pre-start problems. These different boats are awful to handle, especially in tight situations, so naturally we have been very unsure of ourselves in situations that we would normally have no problem.

We are all quite exhausted. The combination of intense sun, long days, strange diets and difficult boats is taking it's toll, especially on me. The jib on this boat is a complete bear to handle, and it's wearing me down, but you know me... I always manage. We are keeping the fluids down, though, so we'll be ready tomorrow morning.

All in all, we are having a great time. It is possible that we will only sail the last 2 races of the first round tomorrow, but they are considering jumping right into the semi-finals. The wind has been quite strong so far (8-22), and there has been trouble keeping the boats together, so they might try to take advantage of good conditions tomorrow if they get them. We'll see.....Until next time, Bri

Day 3 Update: Hey there, Well, where do I begin? Day 3 was one of those days – lots of close racing. I suppose it all started in our first race (against one of the Italian teams) in which we received a penalty half way up the second beat for tacking too close. We tacked roughly a boat-length ahead of the other boat, but the call still went in Italy's favor. We came within a hair of pulling out the victory anyway by roughing them up with some fancy moves at the finish. But we didn't quite make it... no big deal.

Next race, against the Finnish team, starts off with another penalty against us. To make a Long story short, we passed them, but couldn't get far enough ahead to clear ourselves of the penalty, although we were close.

We finished the round-robin series with a record of 5 wins and 2 losses. We went into the semi-finals in third position. Our opponent is once again the team from Finland.

- Race 1, no problem. We dominate and win by many boat-lengths.
- Race 2, we get off to a good start by forcing them into a penalty. Before long we find ourselves in a good chance for another penalty. As they come to leeward of us on starboard they get extremely close and end up hitting us. Unfortunately, the tough call went against us. Okay, we're a little puzzled, but no problem. With roughly 1 minute to go before the start, we are happily pushing hard from behind about 4 boat-lengths directly leeward of the R/C when a shift of roughly 30-40 degrees hits us hard. At this point we are no longer able to lay the pin and we are directly in Finland's gas. Within 5 seconds, we had gone from controlling to about 10 lengths behind by the time we got clear of the start line. It gets worse. After sailing the first lap, we look upwind only to realize that they have not corrected the windward mark for the new breeze. We tack immediately and again, we are on layline. It still gets worse. About half way up the 2nd beat, the wind shuts off for several minutes. So much so, that we actually went backwards for a time. Needless to say, it was a pretty frustrating race. So, first thing tomorrow we have a do or die match against Finland.

Wish us luck.. -Brian

Day 4 Update: Hey Coach, With the assumption that these e-mails are being forwarded to everybody, I would like to say hello all, and relay the news that we will be bringing home the **2003 Salerno Youth Race Week Trophy!!!** We got off to a great start today by dominating the team from Finland in our 'do-or-die' semi-final race. This helped us to gain a lot of momentum and confidence going into the best of 5 final against Germany. We went on to win the final quite easily in 3 straight races, which was immediately followed by a celebratory swim. Thanks again to everybody for all the outstanding support! We've got a trophy presentation to go to, so I'm off.

We will be back in the States on Sunday

THANKS TO EVERYONE FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT !!!...

-Brian, Scott and Steve