



## British Ladies bring home the Gold at the FISU Women's World University Match Racing Championships

Team Vose, Nagel, Prime and Peters dominated the match racing at Lake Ledro last week to win the FISU (International University Sports Federation) Women's Match Racing Worlds, bringing home a women's gold medal for the first time. The Open teams of Wilkinson and Miller fared less well, in the very tricky conditions, finishing in 15<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> respectively.



Photo credit © Bruce Hebbert

27 teams, representing 14 countries competed at the events (8 in the Women's, 19 in the Open).

After arriving in their matching BUCS (British Universities & Colleges Sports) kit on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> June, teams attended accreditation and weigh in on Sunday before being let loose on the J22s (open) and the UFO 22s (women's).

The Championships began in earnest that evening with an opening ceremony where all teams were introduced to numerous dignitaries and hundreds of supporters, friends and family members. The organisers had pulled out all the stops, with a military honour guard, local dance troupe and a specially created video reel highlighting the beauty of their local region.

As day one dawned all three British teams took to the water to begin the round robin. With more teams in attendance than ever before, the open competition was divided into two groups and first up in his group was Wilkinson (GBR 1). Facing up against the defending 2012 Champion, eventual silver medallist and favourite Sam Gilmour (AUS1). Wilkinson started the race in control and with a penalty against his opponent. Wilkinson was to be the first victim of what was to become known as 'Ledro luck' as Gilmour, who was only 50 metres to the right managed to sail off in his own zephyr of wind to clear his penalty and sail away to an unassailable lead. Day one was a difficult day for the boys and, by the end, Wilkinson had won only one of his four matches, while Miller (GBR 2) had won two and lost two. Only Vose with her team emerged unscathed at the end of the day with two wins out of two.



Day two started with a long delay, waiting for some wind. Racing finally got underway in a patchy breeze with Vose continuing her winning form in both of her matches. Wilkinson had a tough battle in his only match of the day which Ledro Luck once again decided should not go his way. Miller won his first race and was leading his second only to see the trailing boat tack one boat length earlier and sail around them to steal the victory. Speaking that day Miller's bowman Bruno van Dyke said, "it was really frustrating today. We're sailing really well as a team, especially given we've only been together for 5 months, We're improving with every race, our comms are better, and we are coping with the associated pressures of match racing really well, so to lose our second race today when we were so close to them really stung. Still tomorrow's another day so hopefully Ledro luck will be on our side".



Day three, Team Manager and Coach Jack Fenwick commented; "I'm fairly sure all three teams thought it would be funny to see how high they could raise my blood pressure. From my vantage point on the right hand side of the course I watched as all three teams started their first races of the day with a penalty against them in the prestart. One by one though each team sailed great races, overtaking from behind in some cases, to extend far enough to take those penalties and still win their races. The closest of these races was by far Miller's race against Griffin (AUS2). After completing his penalty on the final beat the boats were overlapped as they got to the windward mark. Some swift thinking from Miller to luff the Aussies, instead of hoisting, allowed them to get just far enough ahead to extend again on the final run and win by a couple of lengths."

Fenwick continued, "Annabel and her team continued their winning ways and by the end of the day had won their remaining matches to finish the first round robin undefeated. In what, in my biased opinion, was the play of the event, Annabel showed great presence of mind when approaching the line early. She tacked back straight in to a dial down that caught her opposition so unaware that as the GBR girls crossed the line they left them floundering in their wake."

Day four finally delivered some champagne sailing conditions on Lake Ledro. Racing quickly got underway allowing the race committee to complete the open round robin. Miller sailed well in the repechage to progress to a place in the quarter finals against Team Ichikawa (JPN). With the quarter final being first to two points, racing was a very close affair. Miller took the first race in a close fought battle, with the second race just as close, but with Ichikawa (JPN) taking the win, to stage a final race showdown. After a commanding start, Miller sailed in to a strong lead which he never relinquished. Unfortunately due to an error in reading the course, GBR 2 sailed to the wrong windward mark and the race was awarded to Team Ichikawa (JPN).

In the playoffs, Wilkinson was back on form, controlling every race to win all of their races bar one. They finished the day with one more race to sail to decide who would top this group.

In the women's racing, Vose continued her dominance to qualify top of the group undefeated and give them the right to choose team Poncioni Mota (BRA1) as their opponent for the semi-finals.

Day five brought another long delay, waiting for wind. However the teams managed to get afloat for long enough for Vose to win her semi-final 2-0. In one of the closest races of the competition, Vose chased Poncioni Mota (BRA1) all the way around the course, and some swift thinking to force them in to a gybing battle just 40 metres from the finish line allowed her to squeeze past to take the win by 2 metres and remain undefeated.



As the competitors gathered for the final day of racing, they were once again greeted by the sight of a windless lake, forcing them to sit and wait for a breeze suitable for a championship final.

In the 7/8<sup>th</sup> Playoff Miller started strong with a victory over Team Liu (SIN1), the breeze did not hold for long and the teams would once again have to wait. With a more solid breeze building on the lake the finals began in earnest. Leading the Open Championships was Snow (USA) taking a surprising, but well deserved 2-0 victory over event favourite Gilmour (AUS1). While Quiroga (FRA1), similarly despatch Ichikawa (JPN) 2-0.

Meanwhile, Vose, in her first race against Courtois (FRA), jumped the gun by a matter of centimetres to be called back by the race committee. Sailing their socks off the girls clawed back a sizeable deficit to mount an attack on the final run, but the French team managed to hold on to take the race by a length. In the second race an uncharacteristic error from Vose landed the team with a penalty in the prestart. Unfazed the girls led off the start line and extended far enough ahead to take their penalty on the second beat, positioning themselves between the French and the mark, giving them no way back in to the race.

In a thrilling final race Vose once again came off the line in control, but, with the French able to split tacks, they held a narrow lead around the top mark. Unwilling to give up the French chased hard the whole way round. However Vose maintained her composure to cross the line ahead and win the title.

Vose commented after winning gold, *"We all had an incredible week sailing in such a beautiful lake in such different boats. We really thrived on the first few days, while everyone else was getting used to asymmetric spinnakers. Fresh from the ISAF*



Photo credit ©Fabio Franceschi

*Women's Worlds where we raced against much older, more experienced teams, we put all that we had learnt into action. The lake of Ledro is extremely difficult, a standard race includes a 90 degree wind shift; this was a big test for us when you are doing so well and your wind just dies out. However we held it together in every race finishing the first and another half round robin with no losses. Next we had the final and semi-final where we had some really tough races and photo finishes to progress into the lead and become the FISU Women's World University Match Racing Champions. We had some great support from coaches Nigel King and Jack Fenwick and organisations BUCS, RYA, BUSA and the Royal Southern Yacht Club."*

Many of the sailors are now looking forward to various European and International Match Racing events over the summer, and will look forward to the next instalment of the FISU World University Match Racing Championships taking place in Perth, Australia in September 2016.

Fancy a shot at match racing yourself or think you would like to win FISU in Perth 2016? Why not enter now for the [RYA Youth Match Racing Championships](#) at the end of August.

## **RESULTS**

### **OPEN CATEGORY**

- 1 USA SNOW
- 2 AUS1 GILMOUR
- 3 FRA QUIROGA
- 4 JPN ICHIKAWA
- 5 SIN2 LEE
- 6 ITA GALATI
- 7 SIN1 LIU
- 8 GBR2 MILLER (Connor), Matthews (Mike), Houlding (Harry), Van Dyke (Bruno)
- 9 TUR KARAHAN
- 10 POL SADOWSKI
- 11 AUS2 GRIFFIN
- 12 FIN RONNBERG
- 13 CAN1 GARDNER
- 14 RUS KATAEV
- 15 GBR1 WILKINSON (Nick), Barnham (Fergus), Brown (Fred), Hopper (Robbie)
- 16 GER MAIER
- 17 BRA GROCHTMANN
- 18 ITA2 CAVALLARI
- 19 CAN2 HEARST

### **WOMEN CATEGORY**

- 1 GBR VOSE (Annabel), Nagel (Emily), Prime (Amy), Peters (Hannah)
- 2 FRA COURTOIS
- 3 BRA1 PONCIONI MOTA
- 4 SIN1 LIM
- 5 ITA WETZL
- 6 AUS1 MCCALL
- 7 AUS2 STROINOVSKI
- 8 BRA2 CARDIA JARDIM

**Associazione Vela Lago di Ledro** [www.wuc2014.avll.it/](http://www.wuc2014.avll.it/)

**British Universities Sailing Association:** [www.busa.co.uk](http://www.busa.co.uk)

