Wilke masts congratulates, Giles, Ben and all other Finn champions for their wins and successes at Miami, Palma, Hyeres Weymouth, test event, Europaans and Finn Gold Cup during 2011.

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The pre-regatta favourite didn’t perform as expected and by the half way stage was struggling. However he turned it around in the second half and went into the medal race with just a two point deficit to take his third Finn Olympic Gold Medal after a tense 30 minutes to become the most decorated Olympic sailor of all time.

In many ways the dark horse of the regatta, the double world champion surprised everyone by leading through the entire event, amassing a 10 point lead by the half way stage. A capsize and a bad start cost him heavily in the second half and then a poor shift out of the start in the medal race gave the early lead to Ainslie and the dream was all over.

After a consistent performance all week and always near the top, he left himself one last chance to go home with a medal. His positive attitude brought him to the front in the medal race to dominate and win comfortably, but as events behind him developed the bronze medal was never a surety until the final mark was passed.
Dear Finn Sailors,

Dear Friends of the Finn Community,

No. 142 • November 2012

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Cover photo: Ben Ainslie celebrates his third Finn gold medal in Weymouth.

Photo: François Richard

Insets: Start in Weymouth (photo by François Richard), Silver Cup, Michele Sandrucci (photo by Marina Prinzivalli).

Next issue: April 2013

Back issues: Back issues are available through the Finnsnap on the IFA website from GBP 2 each including postage.

President’s Letter

Weymouth showcased a great fight for Olympic Finn medals with Ben, Jonas and Jonathan occupying the podium. However, the whole Olympic Finn fleet contributed to the fact that the Finn repeatedly appeared on the media headlines before, during and after the Games. The Finn not only delivered a memorable fight between true sailing heroes, but showed the world that sailing is a truly athletic sport complemented with a variety of technical skills, meteorological and tactical knowledge. On top of that, the Finn looked great on TV thanks to our gear evolution and the boat’s athleticism.

Leading up to the Olympics the best Finn sailors of the world participated at the 2012 J.P. Morgan Asset Management Finn Gold Cup in Falmouth and the Finn Festival created around the event. Thanks to the organisers and all participating competitors the event proved to be a major success both on and off the water.

All in all, this summer saw the Finn in extremely good shape and on behalf of the IFA Executive I would like to thank everyone for their support from sailors to coaches, event organisers to supporting parents, sailing clubs, sponsors and federations.

Olympic Finn campaigns offer the challenge that is envisioned in the Olympic ideals. The Finn allows the widest range of weight, age and physical sizes to compete on a truly equal level and is the only dinghy to allow sailors of the world to participate. The Finn not only delivered a memorable fight for Olympic Finn medals with Ben, Jonas and Jonathan occupying the podium.

All countries across the world bring more and more sailors to the Finn at a younger age. Class newcomers are now mainly juniors or ex Laser sailors with many new countries starting Finn programmes targeting the 2016 Rio Games.

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New President for British Finn Association
The British Finn Association (BFA) held its AGM during the Finn Open weekend at Christchurch on the 7-8 July. Andy Denison (right) stood down as chairman and was thanked by all for his contribution to the class over the past seven years, Graham Brookes (left) was duly elected the new president of the BFA.

New Secretary of Italian Finn Association
Francesco Faggiani (ITA 4) is the new Secretary of the Italian Finn Association. He was unanimously elected on September 23 at the AGM which was held in Scarlino during the Italian Open Championship. Francesco has been actively sailing the Finn for more than 10 years and is one of the top Italian Masters. He was 10th at the 2012 Finn World Masters in Pwllheli. His predecessor Marco Buglielli stepped down after eight years and will continue sailing the Finn and supporting the Italian Association. Thank you Marco (left) for all your hard work and welcome Francesco (right).

ISAF World Rankings - all change
ISAF has introduced a new world ranking system using a simplified formula that it hopes will be more representative of true sailor performance. The final ranking list using the old scoring system was released on August 15 2012 and it is interesting to note the changes from one scoring system to the other.

Fleet racing - Open - Finn - August 15 2012
1  Rafa Trujillo Villar ESP 5460
2  Ivan Kljakovic Gaspic CRO 5433
3  Pieter-Jan Postma NED 5419
4  Deniss Karpak EST 5412
5  Jonas Hogh-Christensen DEN 5286
6  Brendan Casey AUS 5231
7  Zach Railey USA 5190
8  Jonathan Lobert FRA 5105
9  Dan Slater NZL 5010
10  Ben Ainslie GBR 4989
11  Daniel Birgmark SWE 4971
12  Vasilij Zbogar SLO 4818
13  Eduard Skornyakov RUS 4773
14  Tapio Nirkko FIN 4719
15  Edward Wright GBR 4620
16  Michael Maijer CZE 4608
17  Gregory Douglas CAN 4586
18  Björn Allansson SWE 4493
19  Andrew Mills GBR 4487
20  Olexiy Borysov UKR 4446

On September 18 ISAF released a new scoring system using a new formula. The new calculation uses an annual system, a simpler formula and three possible event grades. The key changes are:
• A one year rolling system
• Sailors can count points from a maximum of six regattas
• The grading of regattas for the Olympic classes will be allocated one of the following three grades: 200-pointer, 100-pointer or 50-pointer
• Simplified calculation formula

Fleet racing - Open - Finn - Sept. 19 2012
1  Jonas Hogh-Christensen DEN 1001
2  Brendan Casey AUS 983
3  Pieter-Jan Postma NED 980
4  Deniss Karpak EST 968
5  Zach Railey USA 938
6  Rafa Trujillo Villar ESP 917
7  Björn Allansson SWE 901
8  Gregory Douglas CAN 874
9  Caleb Paine USA 827
10  Alexey Selivanov RUS 879
11  Matthias Miller GER 771
12  Ben Ainslie GBR 767
13  Olexiy Borysov UKR 741
14  Eduard Skornyakov RUS 740
15  Andrew Mills GBR 732
16  Michael Maijer CZE 714
17  Matt Coutts NZL 691
18  Daniel Birgmark SWE 687
19  Ivan Kljakovic Gaspic CRO 677
20  Dan Slater NZL 675

Last but not least let me congratulate our Masters fleet which enjoyed another successful Masters Worlds, this time in Wales, and a newly introduced European Cup regatta on Lake Balaton.

Best regards

Dr. Balázs Hajdu
HUN-1
IFA President
The London 2012 Olympic Sailing Competition for the Finn class was, perhaps, the highlight of the sailing events with the enthralling battle on and off the water between Ben Ainslie and Jonas Høgh-Christensen making headlines across the world. While the end result was what many expected, the way it played out was not. The Finns were the first class to start and after a week of exceptionally tough racing, it all came down to the medal race in front of the capacity crowd, and more, on the grassy banks and rocky beaches by the Nothe Fort.

Day one
The regatta started where it ended, on the Nothe course area with spectators and wind-shifts galore. With the wind gradually increasing from 11-12 knots up to around 16-17 knots, Jonas Høgh-Christensen won the pin with Florian Raudaschl just above him. Ben Ainslie started mid line and then favoured the right side of the course. Given the often shifty nature of the course it was interesting to see that the fleet was almost evenly split across the course area going upwind. Høgh-Christensen judged the first beat perfectly to lead round from Raudaschl and Ioannis Mitakis. He sped away downwind and was never really threatened to win the race by a margin of around 20 seconds.

Raudaschl sailed well to stay near the front, though he slipped to sixth on the final downwind while Mitakis hung on for fourth. Ainslie rounded the first mark in tenth but pulled up to third at the gate with some superb downwind sailing. He went right on the next beat and lost places back to sixth. He was back to third on the next downwind, but Ivan Kljakovic Gaspic was now in second. Ainslie finally went left on the final beat and then slid into second on the last downwind with Kljakovic Gaspic third.

The second race, sailed out in Weymouth Bay in slightly less wind, followed a similar pattern with Høgh-Christensen winning the pin again and sailing away from the fleet. He rounded the top mark with a nice lead over Ainslie. Brendan Casey rounded in third, but his repairs after a collision in race 1 were not holding well and he dropped to seventh as sea water found its way into his boat. Kljakovic Gaspic worked his way up to third on the second beat, but couldn’t catch the two leaders with Høgh-Christensen winning his second race of the day from Ainslie.

There was a lot of talk in Weymouth about Ainslie’s chance to become the most decorated sailing Olympian of all time – winning gold would break the record held by Paul Elvstrøm – but also about Høgh-Christensen protecting that record for Denmark. Both went on record to say that this was not their main concern. Høgh-Christensen said, “That was not my main focus. Paul Elvstrøm was the greatest sailor of all time. If I get a chance to protect that legacy that’s what I will do.” Despite two second places Ainslie had sailed his best ever opening day at an Olympics. At previous Games he had always picked up high scores or had some misfortune. He said, “It wasn’t the greatest of races in the beginning, but that spurred me on. I have been better, but it is where you finish.” The crowd on the Nothe provided encouragement. “I could hear it clearly and it really spurred me on.”
Day two
The second day’s racing set the pattern for the rest of the opening series. Located on the western course in big waves and big tides, it often became a one way track that favoured the risk takers on the start line.

Race three belonged to Dan Slater. He rounded the top mark with a narrow lead from Pieter-Jan Postma and Mitakis and extended on every leg. By the bottom mark Mitakis had dropped down the fleet while Høgh-Christensen had climbed to second, with Postma third. Ainslie rose to fourth on the run but lost places upwind again and finished in sixth. The top three remained the same with Slater extending to win by half a minute.

The fourth race was full of drama. First Høgh-Christensen hit the pin end on the start and after re-rounding headed out right to clear his wind, but in last place. Ainslie also had a bad start and at the top mark the two were 14th and 21st. At the front Tapio Nirkko rounded first from Daniel Birgmark and Rafa Trujillo. Nirkko then capsized at the downwind mark, though recovered his boat quickly and rejoined the race in sixth. Then Trujillo also capsized after his rudder popped off. The new leader was Jonathan Lobert who had moved into second on the downwind. Lobert held onto the lead round the next windward mark but the fleet had compressed slightly with Høgh-Christensen nor Ainslie could make any gains.

Høgh-Christensen said, “I am very happy so far. Today was actually a good day. In the first race I didn’t know what was going to happen. There was big cloud coming down the course and I thought it could go both ways so I decided to start in the middle and play it safe. I rounded the windward mark in sixth or seventh. And then I had a good downwind and got to second.”

Ainslie, “I wasn’t happy with my own performance. It will get me fired up for the rest of the week. It’s a very fine line between success and failure at this level. I don’t think I went the right way all day.”

Then in the second race I hit the pin end committee boat. It was really frustrating and a stupid, stupid mistake. It was a little bit of tide and a bit of bad timing. I had a chance to bail out at 20 seconds but didn’t take it, when I should have. I had to go round and do a turn and started way last and had to fight my way back up. I fought my way back to the top guys and was right next to them downwind and then passed them on the second beat so I was really happy with that. It was fantastic to come back like that, but I pushed really, really hard and it felt good.”

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Day three
Race five was dominated by Høgh-Christensen. Starting in the pack, but away from the pin-end boat he soon pulled ahead and with Postma suffering gear failure on the far left, the Dane rounded the top mark with a small lead over Trujillo, Ainslie and Zach Railey. After a flat out reach to the wing mark, there was a fascinating dual on the run, though Høgh-Christensen was starting to pull clear. He held his lead on the next upwind and extended slightly as the wind faded on the final legs. Nirkko and Ainslie passed Trujillo and Ainslie looked to be closing on Nirkko but ran out of track. At the finish it was Høgh-Christensen, Railey, Nirkko and Ainslie, with Kljakovic Gaspic staging a great recovery from 19th at the first mark to fifth.

Ainslie was now firmly on the back foot and needed something special in race six. He started well, winning the pin and controlled the lane to the favoured left side and looked to be coming into the top mark well placed. Meanwhile Høgh-Christensen was forced to tack off to find clear air and trailed on the right. However many boats overstood the top mark and first round was Trujillo from Mitakis, Nirkko and Høgh-Christensen. Ainslie rounded in seventh.

Trujillo led down the run with Deniss Karpak moving up to second from Nirkko and Ainslie, but by the gate Karpak had made big gains to round in first. The Dane was forced to tack away again after he had been passed by Ainslie for the first time this week. However it was all change on the final upwind with Høgh-Christensen splitting from the fleet and making places all the way up to second to round behind Karpak. Trujillo rounded third from Zbogar while Ainslie slipped to fifth.

Karpak extended down the run to lead into the finish and win by nearly a minute. Høgh-Christensen rounded in second but Ainslie had caught up for a thrilling spray filled chase to the line. He just held on for second with Ainslie third and Trujillo fourth.

Ainslie: “He is sailing really well. He is a good sailor and a big guy. He is having the regatta of his life. He’s on fire.”

Up to this point Høgh-Christensen had been producing the type of performance that everyone expected Ainslie to produce. Some great race wins, all round speed dominance and some incredible comebacks. He went into the lay day with a 10 point lead over Ainslie. He said, “I am super content with that. Another good day. You have got to take your breaks when you can. I am an old man in the fleet and I definitely need a rest.”

Ainslie sounded slightly dispirited, “It’s tough. Sometimes these things work out, but unfortunately for me, this week it hasn’t.”

Day four
After a rest day on Wednesday the fleet returned to the water on Thursday for the fourth day’s racing. It was a big day out on the water with big winds, big waves and bigger stakes. For Ainslie it was crucial that he started to narrow the points gap and he did just that. He owned the start of race seven, locking into the dangerous pin end position early and controlling it with perfection until the gun. The Dane was just to windward and just a bit back from the line, but his problem was the Polish boat that was ahead and on his wind. Piotr Kula was OCS, but he damaged Høgh-Christensen’s start enough so that he had to tack to get clear air.

Ainslie controlled the left along with Trujillo and Postma and they rounded the first mark in this order with Høgh-Christensen in fifth. The reach to the wing was a spray filled sleigh ride. The Dane slid into fourth, and then after rounding the mark dived low to get some separation from the leading bunch. Then disaster struck as he capsized on a big wave. He was up and sailing again in 30 seconds but looked clearly rattled as he rejoined the race in 15th.

At the front Ainslie and Postma were battling for supremacy downwind in the big conditions, rounding opposite gates. Postma briefly got in front of Ainslie at the next top mark but Ainslie soon passed him downwind to extend and win his first race of the week by some 20 seconds from Postma. Kljakovic Gaspic crossed in third with Nirkko in fourth. Third overall Jonathan Lobert (FRA) was fifth while Høgh-Christensen was back in eighth. Early performer Trujillo had gear problems again and dropped to 15th at the finish.

Onto race eight and Høgh-Christensen was back on the offensive, winning the favoured pin end of the line, though he had Trujillo just to windward off him. Ainslie started slightly further up the line but was soon forced to tack off to find a lane. The fleet again favoured the left side with Ainslie heading furthest left when the leaders crossed back.

Round the top mark Trujillo led from Høgh-Christensen, Postma, Nirkko and Ainslie. The Brit went low on the reach and moved up to fourth and then also overtook Postma on the run. At the gate the top four boats rounded the same mark within 10 seconds of each other with a nice gap on the fleet. There was some shouting and Ainslie did a penalty turn. Did he hit the mark? He is adamant that he didn’t. Postma and Høgh-Christensen were adamant that he did. Whatever the truth, Ainslie took a penalty, OCS, but he damaged Høgh-Christensen’s boat further. He rejoined the race in 15th.

The press got a lot of good quotes. Kljakovic Gaspic crossed in third with Nirkko in fourth. Third overall Jonathan Lobert (FRA) was fifth while Høgh-Christensen was back in eighth. Early performer Trujillo had gear problems again and dropped to 15th at the finish.

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and Postma holding a small lead over Ainslie. The final downwind to the finish was a thrilling battle. Høgh-Christensen immediately made inroads into Trujillo’s lead while Ainslie tried to find a route past Postma so he could attack the Dane. But it was Postma who made the first move going wide and then crossing in front of Høgh-Christensen and Ainslie.

Round the last mark it was Trujillo and Postma with Ainslie just sliding round the mark ahead of Høgh-Christensen. Nothing else changed by the finish with Trujillo winning the race from Postma. Ainslie had taken around 70 metres off regatta leader Høgh-Christensen on the run to inflict his second victory over him in one day and further close the points gap. After a third and seventh Kljakovic Gaspic had moved up to the bronze medal position.

Lobert, “It was a rough day. There was a lot of tension this morning. I was quite nervous. I was trying to manage it and in the first race I succeeded a little bit because I had some good downwinds and managed to finish fifth. In the second I had a terrible start and then it was just too hard to come back. So not so good a day for me.”

Høgh-Christensen’s lead had dropped from 10 points to just three but he remained optimistic. “I think I’ve sailed well and done what I’ve wanted to do. I was a bit unlucky today. I don’t think I was more nervous this morning that any other day. But you’re always a bit nervous at the Olympics. We have a very detailed plan from when we wake up to when we go to bed and we’ve been following that plan and it seems to work and it takes a lot of the pressure off.”

Day five
Friday was always going to be a showdown between Ainslie and Høgh-Christensen. The Dane made the best of the start of race 9 and, with the fleet heading to the left yet again, the pin end was bunched up. Høgh-Christensen did well on the left, forcing Ainslie to tack off, with Postma doing well on the right. As they approached the top mark Ainslie had trouble finding a clean lane and trailed round in ninth. Mitakis led round from Postma, Casey and then Høgh-Christensen.

By the gate, Postma had worked out a 50 metre lead and he comfortably extended away to win his first race of the series. Behind him there was a tense battle with Kljakovic Gaspic making a huge gain on the downwind to move up to fifth at the gate. Lobert also gained to second with Zbogar close behind in third.

On the final beat Postma pulled further away while Zbogar found his way into second. Nothing much else changed in the closing stages except Kljakovic Gaspic moved into fourth from Høgh-Christensen while Ainslie took three places on the final downwind to finish one place behind the Dane.

Høgh-Christensen had extended his lead to a crucial four points, but all that was about to change in the final opening series race. Postma and Ainslie started well by the pin while Høgh-Christensen was forced to tack away. Postma went furthest left and came back just above Ainslie, while Høgh-Christensen was struggling out to the right. As they approached the top mark it was clear that the left was still paying and Postma rounded first from Ainslie, Greg Douglas, Mitakis, Trujillo and Høgh-Christensen.

While Ainslie soon passed Postma and sailed away from the fleet, Høgh-Christensen put on a surge to pass four boats and round the gate in second, but nearly a minute behind Ainslie. On the second beat, Ainslie slowed up for a while and looked to be waiting for the Dane. He would have liked to have one boat between then to make life easier in the medal race and everyone watching expected a confrontation. But he never really got closer than 100 metres so the physical effect was minimal, even if perhaps the psychological effect was obvious.

But then Postma found a way past Høgh-Christensen and Ainslie rounded the top mark with a 90 metre lead to lead down to the finish. At the finish Ainslie led by a considerable margin while Postma held on to second. Høgh-Christensen had to settle for third with Trujillo fourth.

Trujillo must have been the unluckiest person in Weymouth. Over the course of the week he had suffered numerous random gear failings. His mainsheet, halyard, rudder and kicking strap all failed at key moments causing him to lose all hope of a second medal to add to the silver won in 2004 in Athens. “Making the medal race is not really any consolation for all that has happened this week after all the work we have done in the past years. We have checked everything 100 times before the Games. I have never lost a rudder upwind before. But if it’s not meant to be then it’s not meant to be.”

Ainslie, “I was pretty frustrated yesterday, but when you get out there you have to put it behind you and sail smart. It’s taken me all week to find the turbo button and get out in front.”

Høgh-Christensen, “It was a tough day today but I thought I did quite well. I didn’t have the best downwind in the first race but I managed to get close. On the tactical move by Ainslie on the final beat. “Ben stopped for a bit but didn’t do anything. I think he was thinking about doing something but it was probably too big a risk for him to try and put boats in between us.”

The two point gap meant that it was almost a straight match race between Ainslie and
The physical requirements of sailing a Finn are like no other boat on the Olympic Circuit. You have to be big and have the frame to build the strength needed to sail the boat. Power is the number one word I think of when I think of a Finn sailor; we are just big powerful guys. With the new sailing techniques and especially the new 10 knot free pumping rule we have seen the fleet become much fitter while maintaining the strength needed to control the boat.

The top Finn sailors in the World will spend four days a week lifting in the gym, three days a week doing cardio training sessions, eating the right nutrition and will do all of this while sailing five days each week because the boat requires that type of dedication. Finn sailing requires you to hike against a boat that has non-stop power while sailing upwind. The burn and pain that runs through your body while hiking, I have never felt in another boat in my career.

Finn sailing is simply a test of power and endurance. Then imagine doing that for 20 minutes upwind and then going straight into a downwind or reach where your heart rate is at 180 bpm or higher; do this over and over again until you reach your target race time of 75 min. Then do that at least two times a day and then do that for six days straight. I challenge anyone to do this and come back and tell a Finn sailor that the Finn is not physically Olympic.

Zach Railey, USA

Høgh-Christensen for the gold medal, with the added complication that Postma could take gold if these two were right at the back and he was in the top two.

Trujillo, “This is the best venue we have ever had for an Olympic Games.”

Medal race
On Sunday 5 August, the whole sailing world was on the edge of its seat for 30 agonising minutes as the Finn fleet duked it out for the medals and left everyone waiting right until the thrilling ending. None of the medals were decided until the final stages of the calamitous final leg.

Høgh-Christensen had the advantage over Ainslie out of the start forcing the Brit to tack off to the right, the normally unfavoured side. The left has been favoured all week, but Ainslie through luck or judgement found a shift back to be ahead of the Dane at the top mark, though both were deep in the fleet. Kljakovic Gaspic led at the front from Lobert, but the puffy conditions enabled Ainslie to fly down the first downwind to round in second behind Lobert.

As the wind went lighter Høgh-Christensen tacked off to the right and Ainslie followed. It was nearly his undoing. The two dropped back to ninth and tenth in the race. As Lobert extended away from the fleet, on the final beat, the left side came in big and Postma made a spectacular recovery to round in third. He was one place from taking gold as the fleet approached the final downwind mark before the short reach to the finish. Unfortunately he pushed too hard, his boom touched the back of Dan Slater’s boat and after doing his turns he was back in fifth and out of the medals.

Ainslie had stuck to Høgh-Christensen. Being so far back in the fleet all he could do was make sure he stayed in front. He stayed there to the finish to claim the gold medal to the deafening roars of the local crowd. It was a suspense filled race, made even worse by the unstable puffy winds.

Gear used at the Olympics

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Codes: Sails: N – North, N(NZ) – North New Zealand, WB – WB-Sails
Rudders: D – Devoti, RB – Ron Bull
Masts: W – Wilke, C – Concept, H – Hit
Booms: A – Allen, N – Needlespar
with sailors moving up and down the fleet, and they all kept everyone guessing to the very end. It was a made for TV thriller.

Lobert commented, "It was a crazy race and a very difficult one. I said I would do my own race and I would try to win it if I could and try not to make any mistakes and I did that. I didn't see what happened to PJ because I was already on the last reach. I heard shouting behind. When I started the second lap I was already in a medal position. PJ was far behind but got this magic shift on the left and came back, so I decided to make sure I won the medal race and then this happens."

"I think this is good for the sport because we are always sailing long races so far out and as you see in this type of racing a lot can happen. It's a new game. Today for me it was good, sometimes it's not so good, but anything can happen. So I think it's much more exciting for TV."

A disappointed Høgh-Christensen was upbeat about his performance. "I did what I wanted to do but it just didn't go my way. I got the start I wanted and got in the perfect position and squeezed him off to the right. I totally followed my plan. Unfortunately the right paid for the first time this week. Ben put a cover on me then, probably too tight. At one point PJ had the gold."

"I am pretty happy with silver. I have lost by the smallest margin possible. Of course that's good fun and great for the sport. But it's just a shame as I did what I wanted to do. Looking back at the week there's a couple of races where you can gain same points, like the capsize, of course. I had the gold in my hands and just couldn't materialise it."

Ainslie said, "It was really nerve racking. It was a really tense race. There was a lot at stake in really difficult conditions. I was just really glad to come through it. PJ sailed really well after a great series. Jonas as well. They both sailed so well, especially Jonas who had one of the best series I've ever seen, so to come back was big relief."

At the medal ceremony the medals were presented by HRH The Princess Royal and the flowers were presented by HM King Constantine.

Ainslie, "It's just an amazing feeling and big thanks to everyone who has supported me over the years. From being a kid down in Cornwall, to my time in the Finn class, I have really enjoyed every minute of it. It's been fantastic."
Martin Robitaille from Canada took the 2012 Finn Junior World Championship for the Jorg Bruder Finn Silver Cup after a week of close racing on the Lac de Maubuisson. The Junior European Champion Michal Jodlowski from Poland took the silver, while the defending champion Arkadiy Kistanov from Russia took the bronze.

A small but talented fleet of 24 boats and 12 nations took part in the 11 race series from 1-6 July, which was sailed in generally light and shifty winds. Russia once again fielded the largest team with eight sailors. The championship was declared open by Brigitte Viaud, President of the host club, the Cercle de Voile de Bordeaux.

Lennart Luttkus early leader
Lennart Luttkus took the lead after consistent racing on the first day of racing. The championship started with nice but tricky conditions with varying pressure and shifts making it tough for the young sailors. The first race gave the choice between the right with more pressure or the left with a more favoured angle, with sailors spread over the course, some taking drastic options on each side of the course.

The race winners came back from the left side on the third beat. Cem Gozen was in front of the fleet for the last downwind but failed to pass through the gate before crossing the finish line. The young Turk switched from the Laser to the Finn earlier this year. He bounced back in the second race with a fifth place. Meanwhile, it was James Hadden who took the bullet closely followed across the line by Luttkus and Milosz Wojewski.

Vice European Champion, Dimitar Vangelov recovered in the second race after a difficult first one. The Bulgarian led from start to finish to take the bullet. Viktor Filipov and Luttkus took second and third in the race. At the end of the day Luttkus was leading the regatta by four points over Filipov and Wojewski.

Double win to Robitaille
After picking up some letter scores on the first day Martin Robitaille put it all behind him with two victories on day two in light winds. The conditions were difficult again, with wind averaging five to ten knots and varying across the course.

In the first race he was leading most of the way, though on the second lap upwind Andrei Yanitckii got very close. The Russian finally placed second with Luttkus third.

Race two started at the third attempt with three sailors penalised for premature starts. Robitaille took a great start at the pin end and went on to take his second win of the day. Sergey Akulinichev placed second with Luttkus in the top three again.

Robitaille said, “I had an excellent day, everything came back together. I was calmer and less ambitious, taking what I could on the water and in less.”

Luttkus had now increased his lead to 24 points while the top seven had yet to win a race.

Kistanov pulls back
Defending champion Arkadiy Kistanov enjoyed the best of day three and narrowed the gap on the leader.

After a clear start, Kistanov played the shifts and pressure well in a medium breeze, to take the lead from the first mark to the finish. Never really threatened he covered his track and didn’t allow compatriot Andrei Yanitckii or Robitaille, in second and third, to pass him.

The second race started after a change of course to allow for the constant wind shifts. A group of six sailors lead by Wojewski played the left of the course to pass the top mark in front of the fleet. With a yellow flag collected in the previous race, Wojewski played it safe on the downwind; allowing Cem Gozen to over the course, some taking drastic options on each side of the course.

Luttkus still led overall with a seven and tenth, but now only had a seven point lead.

World Champion into the lead
Kistanov took the overall lead on day 4. In race 7 he started on the pin end to get to the left where the wind was more favourable. He was leading at the top mark and led the two Polish sailors Wojewski and Jodlowski across the line in second and third.

Encouraged by his third place, Jodlowski went on to win the next race. “I think I have finally broken the code of this lake. I feel more confident making my choices, especially upwind. I had watched the wind between the races and the right seemed better this time. I saw the fleet go left like in the first race and was one of the few to chose the right side. I was first at the windward mark and sailed the rest of the race conservatively on the run, trying not to make any mistakes.”

Kistanov, said, “It will be hard to keep the lead. There are a lot of sailors who can still win and the World Champion will be decided on the last race.”

Second and third place in race eight went to Robitaille and Thomas Morel. The Canadian was now in second overall and only one point from Kistanov. Early leader Luttkus was in third place, but the scoreboard remained tight with six sailors within four points of each other.
Martin Robitaille wins Silver Cup

Robitaille and Kistanov were on equal points, while Jodlowski was only one point behind. The final race was a tight one with lots of pressure. They all played cat and mouse at the front, with each of them taking the lead at times, but the Canadian came back on the last run taking the race and the title.

By winning the last race of the Finn Silver Cup, he didn't leave any doubt that he truly deserved the Finn Junior World title. Despite a difficult start with an OCS, a penalty from the jury and one from the measurer, the Canadian was able to bounce back, winning four races and the title.

"It was a tight event and I am happy that I was able to stay focussed. Results were up and down for most sailors, but I gained confidence and sailed well," he said.

This is the first Finn title for the Canadian who has already set his mind on the future. "I would like to reach the top 16 in the rankings within two years and qualify for the next Olympic Games in Rio." A lot of the Junior Finn sailors are sharing the same objective for the 2016 Olympic Games and given the standard seen this week, many among them will be there to represent their country. Until then the road will be paved with more Finn challenges.

Robitaille takes lead

With finally some good breeze increasing to 14 knots on the second race and raising of the Oscar flag for free pumping, Anders Pedersen from Norway sailed his best races with a win and a third. Another one to enjoy the breeze was Peter McCoy who scored a third and a second place to climb to eighth overall.

The first race started with medium wind and a windward leeward course. Pedersen was third at the top mark, behind Kistanov and Yanitckii, but passed them on the following legs. "Today was a better day for me," explains Pedersen. "All week I have been fast but in the wrong place. The wind was still very shifty and tricky on the downwind today but I managed well." Yanitckii placed second and McCoy third.

The second race was won by Robitaille taking him into the regatta lead. Second place went to McCoy who scored his best results today. "I enjoyed more breeze today, the shifts were more manageable for me. I made my gains downwind on the reaches passing from sixth to second."

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The goodbyes are not just limited to Ainslie. Almost a dozen of those who competed at Weymouth and Portland have probably sailed their final Finn regatta and have hung up their hiking pants one last time. The game is changing at a fast pace. The new generation are younger, taller, stronger and fitter than ever before. And they are all hungry for success. Silver medalist Jonas Høgh-Christensen pointed this just before the Games, “I love the Finn and think it has gotten a revival with the new physical aspects. It is for sure the hardest boat on the Olympic programme. Real athletes pushing super hard. Next time around there will be no old school sailors with a bit too much fat. They will be fit, tall and young. With that said it looks like my time is up.”

The group of elite athletes that was the Finn fleet at London 2012 had trained together, competed against each other and enjoyed the thrill of the battle together for most of their adult life. Many had done two or three Olympics. Some were newcomers, but all had faced the journey together, living the old cliché, ‘The journey is the reward.’

As we witnessed during the competition, the sailors can be ruthless on the water but have a great sense of camaraderie off the water. Bronze medalist Jonathan Lobert put it best, ”The most important thing I learned in the Finn Class is that it is possible to sail like gentlemen – enemies on the water, but very good friends on the shore.”

While the older sailors have perhaps had their day in the limelight the young are ready to move in to try and emulate their heroes.

Many of those sailing in London 2012, and some who missed selection, have already started their campaign for Rio 2016. But there is no easy route. It’s a long hard road of perseverance and dedication. Some of those who learned valuable lessons in 2012 will be those who will shine in 2016. London 2012 is behind us, and we look forward to the challenges that Rio 2016 will bring.

Highlight
The battle in the Finn class proved to be the highlight of the sailing competition at London 2012. Quite how it played out no one could have guessed, but it turned into a nail biter right through to the closing minutes of the very last race.

The best sailor of the opening series was undoubtedly Høgh-Christensen. The best sailor in the medal race was probably Lobert. Meanwhile Ainslie was making headlines because he was not producing the dominating performance that everyone expected. He said, “It is always hard when people say you are a dead cert to win; you try to tell them that is not the case, but they don’t listen.”

Though Høgh-Christensen ran away with the first half of the competition in terms of a points lead, in fairness, Ainslie had also put together a pretty good series. His only problem was that the Dane had beaten him in all six races.

Then, in the second half of the week, Høgh-Christensen started making a few mistakes. He’d already had a start boat collision in race 4 and then a capsise in race 7 perhaps showed the pressure was getting to him. Ainslie did what he does best. He pounced, grabbed the opportunity by the throat and sank his teeth in hard so he couldn’t let go. With a grimace of determination on his face he gradually clawed back the points gap going into the deciding medal race.

However, in spite of that comeback, Ainslie was clearly under par, we later learned in pain and, in the end, probably quite lucky to come away with the gold. While he struggled with making comebacks in most races, Høgh-Christensen was making them with much more regularity – his epic speed taking him to the front for a while in all but a few races. Only once or twice did Ainslie show the kind of form that had made him the out-and-out pre-regatta favourite for the gold.

The Nothe spectator area provided a great view of the minefield of windshifts and holes on the medal race course, right across to the Portland Harbour wall on the far side. It played havoc within the fleet. We were told it was a price everyone had to pay, though some paid more dearly than others. In the medal race, for the first
time the whole week, the right paid on the first beat which negated the advantage Høgh-Christensen had over Ainslie out of the start.

From then on it became a simple match race between the two best performing sailors of the week. Ainslie led Høgh-Christensen at the top mark and once he had control he never let it go. There was a heart stopping moment when Pieter-Jan Postma emerged from a big left shift on the final beat to round the final top mark in third on a last minute charge – one more place for Postma and the gold would have been heading to The Netherlands – but it wasn’t to be.

You have to feel sorry for Postma. He had done enough for a medal but for some reason decided to push for the gold, rather than consolidate for silver or bronze. In many ways it was a brave move, but one that left him without a medal of any colour. It was barely 50 metres to the finish and he had a medal in his hands. As he tried to pass Dan Slater, the end of his boom touched the back of Slater’s boat. Slater explained, “I said to him, ‘Mate you’ve got a medal. Don’t have a go here. It’s not on.’ I was in a good position to beat Rafa for seventh overall so I had a race on myself. I felt for PJ because he totally made a meal of it. But that’s the pressure of these things. He had a medal sewn up and he took a big risk considering where we were and the timing of it.”

And so, after 10 years of Ainslie domination, it certainly does seem like the end of an era. Ainslie has left the door slightly open with a ‘never say never’ comment, but he also dropped enough hints that this will be the last time we see him in a Finn, and maybe the last time at the Olympics. After a decade at the top he has not only broken all the records in the class but made new ones that are unlikely ever to be broken. Along the way he achieved the highest accolade the Finn class can bestow on its sailors with his entry into the Hall of Fame way back in 2004. Since then he has won three more world titles and two more Olympic gold medals. It was quite a run.

If we have written the last chapter of the Ainslie era in the Finn class then it has been a privilege to watch. Almost single-handedly he took Finn sailing to a whole new level of excellence and focussed the spotlight of the world’s media on the toughest Olympic class of them all.

But the class is already moving on. As one era ends, a new one is about to begin.
Has it sunk in yet what you have achieved?
Yes and no. I was so busy after we finished racing with commitments, and then competing in the ACWS, that I never really stopped to take it all in and that’s a shame in a way. Now, after some time to reflect, I am really proud of what I achieved and relieved that it was not only worthwhile for me but for all the people that gave me so much help and support.

Was there any point at which you thought it wasn’t going to happen?
I knew after race 6 that something had to change if I was going to win. Jonas was on fire and I wasn’t sailing that well, I was too conservative and I knew that I needed to start racing to win.

Was David getting worried that you weren’t going to pull it off and what was he saying to you?
Sid is probably the best coach in the World in those situations. He is completely deadpan, he doesn’t change his feedback or processes he just keeps supporting you 100%.

How did you cope with the rest day to come out fighting to turn it around?
The rest day probably saved me. It gave me a chance to consider what I was doing wrong, why I wasn’t sailing to my best capabilities. I also took quite a lot of motivation from watching some of the other sports and Bradley Wiggins winning the cycling time trials.

How badly was your back affecting your performance?
It was an issue the last six months; it had an impact on my training more than my racing but it was just one of many issues I had to manage and deal with.

Explain the decision not to announce it earlier?
To be honest there were so many things going wrong with my body that it was just one of many issues. Everyone knew I had a problem with my back anyway so there was no point trying to make a big deal out of it. It’s usually not a good idea to announce to your closest rivals that you need injections in your ankles to be able to hike, your back’s knackered and you’re suffering from positional vertigo.

Did a home Games live up to expectations?
I think it was an amazing Games, a real credit to everyone from the organisers, the athletes to all the volunteers. Everyone in Britain was incredibly proud to have hosted such a successful event.

Would you like to see the Finn remain an Olympic class through 2020 and beyond?
I’d like to see that because I think it’s still the most challenging single hander out there for guys over 90kg and there aren’t many options in Olympic sailing for guys that big. I was initially against free pumping but I now think that the physicality it brings to the sailing is exceptional.

Sum up the week for you.
Emotional.
of the Olympics we caught up with the three medalists to get their thoughts and reflections on one of the toughest regattas for a long time. Here’s what they said...

What has been the reaction back home to the medal and has it opened new opportunities?
The reaction has been amazing. People have been great and sailing has been the talk of the Olympics. 1.2 million people watched the medal race in a 6 million people nation. That is the same rating as when our national football team plays a world’s qualifier. I have been offered many TV-shows but turned them down. I hope that this experience will open up more sailing opportunities for the nation. I would like to create both a Danish Volvo team and an AC45 team. If we could promote sailing from Optis and all the way to the seniors, whether it be racing or cruising that would be fantastic.

What are you going to do next in terms of any sailing plans?
Right now I have officially no plans. I would like to be involved in larger teams and I am sure I have a lot to offer a team. What the future brings nobody knows, I am fortunate to have a ‘real’ job, so sailing is not life or death to me. That makes it so much more enjoyable actually.

Is there anything you’d do differently, given the chance to do it all again?
Not really. This time around I got to do it my way. Looking back at a 12 month comeback I think I did great. I finished 4th and 3rd at the 2011 and 2012 worlds. I got that Olympic medal that I aimed for, even though it wasn’t the colour that I aimed for. I managed to give the ‘best’ sailor of our time a run for his money and ended up at the top of the recently announced World Ranking. All in all it is hard to find anything that needed to be changed.

Would you like to see the Finn remain an Olympic class through 2020 and beyond?
Honestly, some years ago I thought that the Finn was slowly going out of fashion. But the changes to the class rules have made it the most interesting and toughest class at the Olympics. No class demands more fitness, tactical racing and technical work. The battles are always close and the sailors are colourful. I am sure that if you did research into what class had more viewers and news coverage the Finn would win by a mile.

Sum up the week for you.
The most exhilarating week of my life.

What are your reflections on winning a medal, especially after such a dramatic medal race?
As I said all week I knew that the Games would be a very tight competition. I knew that I won’t be the fastest upwind but for sure really good on the runs. I just tried to never give up on any boat I could catch and try to focus on myself. In the medal race I knew I couldn’t control all the guys so I just sailed my race. After all you always can say I could have done better but I am really happy with the bronze.

What has been the reaction back home to the medal?
People were very nice to me. A lot of non-sailors told me that they saw the end of the medal race live on the French TV. It is really nice to see the eyes of the kids when they see the medal. I try to put Olympic sailing under the lights and try to make the people realise that it is a great sport.

You were very positive all week, what was the plan going in to the medal race?
As I told you I love the medal race. It’s short and always very intense. You have to be full on all the time. My plan going on the water was simply get some clear air, sail fast and give all you can to have no regrets.

Sum up the racing over the whole week for the whole fleet?
I think in the Finn we had a very consistent week as the top guys didn’t make any big scores. I thought I would sail all week with Vasilij and Bambi, and it was always a big fight between us. Jonas had something more upwind and Ben was always around. I really enjoyed the weather and the waves.

Has the medal win opened new opportunities for you?
For now nothing, but I hope to get some new sponsors to be able to not lose money on the next campaign. I would like to join the America’s Cup and try some big boat regattas, so I am open to any solicitations.

Did the Olympics live up to your expectations?
Yes. It is really a different regatta but it is so good to be part of it.

What are you going to do next in terms of any sailing plans?
For now I take a break with my Finn but I will back next year in Palma to start a new campaign. For the rest everything is still open.

Would you like to see the Finn remain an Olympic class through 2020 and beyond why?
Of course the Finn needs to stay in the Games. It is the last boat for the big guys. It’s also very good looking on TV, especially with the free pumping with the on board camera. I think we need as the class try to make something more attractive to the public. The medal race format is great – it’s intense, close to shore and a lot can happen. I think we need more races like the first one in the games to have the public taking part. We need to mix a bit of the classic sailing race and this new format. Like that the Finn will be, as before, an experimental boat going forward.

Sum up the week for you.
All lot of emotions, stress and pain but so much fun.
Pata Finn - the best performing mast in 2010

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Ivan Klokovic Gaspar winning the 2010 Europeans using Pata mast
Photo by Bozidar Vukcevic

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AUSTRIA
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It was on one of these perfect afternoons at the Finn Cup in Malcesine 2011. A couple of Finns from Germany, Austria, Italy, Switzerland and Sweden, whilst having a meal at the Fraglia Vela Malcesine restaurant, Extrasports Wilke voucher of CHF 1000 for the winner and one of the great Elvstrom sails made Beat Aebsicher for ninth; the series started to be a great success.

But finally in the beginning of April we were ready to go, announcing the prizes of a Wilke voucher of CHF 1000 for the winner and one of the great Elvstrom sails made Beat Aebsicher for ninth; the series started to be a great success.

About 15 Finn sailors on average were attracted in addition to the normal regatta fleets of the four regattas around the Alpine massive. Some sailors like the Swiss flock were making a holiday event from this, always arriving early to the events and enjoying the weekends with their spouses in the beautiful locations in the Alps.

Lago di Caldero had over 50 competitors and was the biggest event of the series, offering windy conditions and the traditionally rich buffet from the club. The regatta in Thun was embedded in the party for the 50th anniversary of the Finn fleet in Thun, with fine sailing and a big party in the evening. The spectacular weather conditions at the Austrian regatta at Mondsee will be talked about for a long time by the sailors and the unique flair of the small club and lake at the German Regatta at Rottachsee will make the sailors want to return next year.

All events were in different locations and with different conditions but had one thing in common: Finn sailors were having fun, competing against new competitors and were making new friends having a beer in the evening with them.

Of course we will continue the Finn Alpen Cup next year, please check the event-page http://finnalpen-cup.wordpress.com for updates on the Finn-Alpen-Cup 2013.

Results 2012

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The feedback so far is great: Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Italy, the Netherlands and Great Britain are supporting this initiative. Other country officials are enthusiastic about it and are going to sell it at their country meetings.

The feedback so far is great: Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Italy, the Netherlands and Great Britain are supporting this initiative. Other country officials are enthusiastic about it and are going to sell it at their country meetings.

The idea is not to set up new regattas, but to use existing regattas to make sure not to cannibalise on existing regattas. The Grand Prix will not replace any existing local or international ranking. We are searching sponsors now for the prizes.

We are still developing the idea and would be grateful for any feedback.

The Finn Alpen Cup 2012

A team of Bernd Rohlf – Austria, Giuseppe di Stefano – Italy, Jiri Huracek – Switzerland and myself was formed to get this idea on the road. We decided to have a series of four existing regattas in the Alpine region, which will count to one trophy. Each regatta will be located in a different country, and we will find some sponsors for prizes and publish the ranking on a website.

The first obstacle was to get a schedule for the regattas, without cannibalising other regattas in the countries, and for this we had very long phone conferences discussing possible regattas and dates. Finally we had a schedule for the series; the regattas counting in the Finn Alpen Cup were:

Italy: Lago di Caldero, Kalterer See (April)
Switzerland: Niederhornkanne Thun (June)
Germany: Meckatzer Cup Rottachsee (July)
Austria: Mohilla Trophy Mondsee (July)

The second obstacle was to find the right ranking calculation for the cup, motivating sailors to compete at as many regattas as possible on one side but being fair if you could not make it to all events. We had an idea for this, but honestly to say, will have to make a few adaptations on the calculation mode for the next year.

The third obstacle was to find sponsors to make the cup attractive and give the competitors a little extra motivation to take part. We convinced Beat Aebsicher from Elvstrom Sails Switzerland and Christof Wilke that it would be a great honour to sponsor this unique event series.

Setting up a webpage for such an event was the next step. This, in the time of Facebook and Wordpress, is not that challenging anymore, though filling it with content is still the same work as years ago.

We are still developing the idea and would be grateful for any feedback.

The Finn Alpen Cup 2012
The Finn Masters European Cup was held on Lake Balaton for the second time, this year between 5-9 September organised by Istvan Rutai at THE sailing club. 61 competitors came from 6 countries. [Text by Márton Beliczay, photos by Jankó Virág.]

On the first day of the regatta, there was a long distance race around the peninsula, which started at noon. Although due to light winds there was only a small race course and only few of the fleet were racing, but the competitors had a great fight for the first place. After that, a practice race was scheduled, but it was cancelled due to lack of wind.

On the first racing day a very nice northerly wind came, similar to last years, but more stable and a bit stronger, gusting up to 25 knots. The sky was a little cloudy, but the air and water temperatures were over 20 degrees, which was enjoyable for everybody. The course was a classical up and down with an offset mark at the end of the beat and a gate at the downwind, after which the competitors had to go reaching to the finish. Bulgarian Mihail Kopanov was the leader after two laps, but he failed to go for the reaching finish and pulled the first few competitors with him for another upwind. Antal Székely knew the course well and slipped under the others and won the race.

The second and the third race were held in similar conditions, although in the last race the wind got a bit lighter and the free pumping was off for the last lap. At the end of the day Minski Fabris (71) was the leader with three third places. After racing the competitors shared their experiences of the day with some nice wine and beer.
Next day the weather was very sunny, the wind was lighter and it was blowing from almost the opposite direction of the previous days. Three races were held in an oscillating, but steady southwesterly breeze of around 7-10 knots. By the end of the day, Minski Fabris was still in the lead with Antal Székely in second place. In the evening, goulash was offered to the competitors along with some wine and beer.

On Saturday the wind came a little later than the day before, but the conditions were the same and after a short postponement, the fleet went out racing. Since the weather forecast said no wind for Sunday, the race officer held all the remaining three races. This brought victory for Minski which is a very big deal considering he is 71 years old this year. Second place went to Antal Székely, third to Igor Frolov, fourth Vasiliy Kravchenko, fifth Géza Huszár and sixth Mihail Kopanov.

After racing, the prizegiving ceremony was held on the main square of Tihany. The overall top six and the winners of each age category received their prizes. Everybody was happy about the event and assured the organisers to come next year as well.

At the moment of writing this it is the end of September 2012.

On September 18th I visited SRR in La Rochelle, the club that will host the 2013 Finn World Masters Championship. We discussed the latest version of the Masters Guidelines. After the voting for La Rochelle we changed the format, especially that part regarding the medal race and I felt the need to go through this with the organisers.

I supplied the articles of the Notice of Race and Sailing Instructions that we wish to be published unchanged in the NoR.

I received only one proposal for the format and it agreed with the format as published in the Masters News in the July 2012 issue of Finnfare: there will be no medal race when we sail in one group and one medal race for the top ten in the overall ranking on the Thursday evening. This is what I discussed with the organisation in La Rochelle.

We have gone through accommodations such as apartments, hotels and camping, as well as camper places. On the marina there will be limited camper space (max 30) and this will be without water and electricity. Not far from the marina there is a free public camper area with water and electricity, without cost, and there is also a municipal camping with full service, but paid. So there will be different possibilities.

Apartments will be available close to the marina of differing quality, but booking will not be possible before the beginning of January 2013. All information about accommodation will be on the event website. This website will be, as promised, on-line during the course of November. Then the Notice of Race will be published as soon as possible and entering can start.

When I left the SRR in La Rochelle the President of the club, Mme Claire Fountaine, said to me: “We will organise a beautiful World Championship for you.” And that made me happy.

Please keep your eye on www.finnworldmaster.com and, when you have a Facebook account, please like Finn World Masters.

I wish you all good winds and hope that many of you will compete in the Finn World Masters 2013 in La Rochelle from May 17 - 24, 2013.

Fons van Gent
NED 748
(Vice) President Masters Fleet
The OFF (Old Finn Farts) Regatta, RCYC

Finn sailors develop an intense and intimate bond. It comes from the knowledge that the challenges are yourself and the ever-evolving techniques and technologies of racing an elegant powerful sailing craft. Finn friends and training partners help with both these challenges. The bond extends over and between generations.

Some months ago three old Canadian Finn friends, Roger Potts, Dave Hendry and Tom Johannsen were out cruising aboard Tom’s Huckleberry II. Looking at each other around the cockpit they noted that there they were, just three old Finn farts. So there and then developed the germ of a reunion regatta for ‘Old Finn Farts’. The OFF Regatta was mainly to have fun and see old friends again. Paul Henderson and others liked the idea and the Royal Canadian Yacht Club agreed to be the host. Tom Johannsen and his daughter Tanya worked mightily to make it happen. Many wanted to come; the 16 who made it (including some grandfathers and great grandfathers) brought wives, families and assorted Finn friends.

The regatta was sailed in RCYC’s fleet of Bruce Kirby (Canadian Finn Representative in the 1964 Olympics) designed ideal 18s, which, as there are no hiking straps, were ideal for those who carried 50 lbs of wet sweaters and have bad backs and creaking knees and can no longer hike. (And some never did.)

Races were sailed without spinnakers, two to a boat, six races on Saturday, four on Sunday, on a windward/leeward slalom course. There was a suggestion in the racing instructions that in the two last races each day boats were to cross the finish line sailing backwards - but it never happened. In order to have as many as possible sail together, there was a draw for races 1-3 and 4-6 on Saturday and races 7-8 and 9-10 on Sunday. As the organisers guaranteed, there was flat water and shifty winds on Toronto Bay along with mild temperatures and brilliant sunshine.

The races were clean and close with lots of position changes. The guys showed that they still really know how to apply the Racing Rules although they had to be a little forgiving at times. The best cumulative score was Paul Henderson’s but that should have been. Paul has been racing on Toronto Bay for more than 70 years and seemed to know what the wind was going to do before it knew.

The Friday barbecue and Saturday banquet were filled with stories by everyone. The depth, breadth and intimacy of the weekend is best told in the words of the participants.

Tom Johannsen - “What luck we had this weekend with the weather. There are few opportunities in life where one can create an atmosphere of genuine friendship and joy as I had the privilege to do.”

Art Diefendorf - “I had no idea it would be so good; none.”

Kit Tatum - “Fellow OFFs, I knew it 40 years ago that those ‘Finn days’ would be the most fun days of my life, and last weekend confirmed that fact all over again.”

Bill McNaughton - “...the weekend highlighted that Finn sailors really are an incredible sailing fraternity that none of us realised we were joining at the time...a continuing presence in all of us that just won’t go away.”

Sandy Riley (Canadian Finn Representative in the 1976 Olympics) - “Unless you have sailed the Finn, it is difficult to describe the magnitude of the challenge presented by the boat in heavy winds, or the intensely competitive nature of the people who race it, or the extraordinary camaraderie and friendships that were created in the dinghy park. It’s a unique fraternity that spans countries and continents.”

Bruce Brymer - “These special old friendships are so important in life. Do not let them slip away. Pick up the phone or email; make the effort to keep in contact with each other.”

Brian Todd – “So many friends and now it seems, so many years ago but I still tell the young sailors about the importance being self motivated, living in a van and travelling around the world, and the friends you make and compete against, those are things you never forget.”

The reunion showed why 300 show up for the Finn World Master’s Championship. It showed that the character of those that sail the Finn has remained very much the same although the Finn itself and the way it is sailed has undergone extensive evolution.

Pumping, ooching and rocking, especially offwind has been a controversial subject for all generations of Finnsters, Paul Henderson being one of those stirring the pot. The current Finn rules solution was developed by judges and sailors. The latest equipment development is an angled foot brace at the front of the cockpit for the deep squat thrust of a sheet pump to drive the bow through and over a wave offwind when the wind is more than 10 knots. This is a developing athleticism that has grown out of the physicality that earlier generations knew well. The IOC and ISAF have to be impressed, as were the OFF participants, by the physical athleticism of the Finn as noted by viewers of the Olympic TV coverage.

For all the developments in technique and technology, racing a Finn is still 99 per cent in the mind and that shared human element is key to what made the OFF Regatta so special. [Text by Gus Miller]
**Finn sailing from across the world**

**DENMARK**

**Danish Nationals**
Gilleleje Sailing Club, 2-4 August

During the three days there was all wind conditions, starting Thursday with fresh winds up to 12 m/s with big round waves. On Friday and Saturday the wind had subsided to a moderate breeze, but now with about 2 knots of current, luckily in the same direction as the wind.

As in previous years the Dutch did well, however, two Danish sailors Jørgen Svendsen and Thomas Morup-Petersen were right behind them. After nine races Karel van Hellemond won five of them, two were won by Sander Willems, and one each by Cees Scheurwater, and Michael Stal. Jørgen Svendsen won the Danish title with a string of top places, only once outside the top four, with Thomas Morup-Petersen taking the silver and Michael Stal the bronze.

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<th>Name</th>
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**Århus**
1-2 of September

Richard Berg-Larsen writes: This was a fantastic regatta with about 250 boats on 4-5 race courses, and the Finns shared course with very different classes from A-Cats to Contenders, and OKs.

The wind was unfortunately from shore, which sailors who have raced off Århus knows means lots of shifts in both strength and direction, so that made problems for most of us. We did also have free pumping in most of the races as the wind was up, before the start, but frequently down on the downwind leg. The only real problem with the race was three showers for 250 sailors, which made me, and a few other sailors decide to leave the race course before the last race both days. That made it easy to find the trolley in peace and quiet, and to get a shower before the rush.

<table>
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<th>Place</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
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<td>8</td>
<td>DEN 18 Richard Berg-Larsen</td>
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**Estonia**

**The Estonian Nationals**

Deniss Karpak once again made a good series with a 1-2-1-1-1. Second place was in a very hard and shifty race with an accident with Lauri Väinsalu, who fouled Karpak on the downwind mark. But Martti Kinkar was the luckiest and took first place.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Name</th>
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**Retro Cup**

Skovshoved, 16-17 September

On the Saturday we had very strong wind of 12-13 m/s, and only one race was sailed. 18 m/s were reported on the trip back to the harbour and nobody complained about getting back early, not least due the length of the race course which was really retro, i.e very long.

Sunday brought better weather, and four races were sailed before 1230. The weather forecast had warned about severe conditions again in the afternoon, and it was decided to start early and get finished before lunch. There was only a small number of entrants with Kaspar Andresen winning from Kenneth Bøggeld, Lars Hall, Michael Stal and Jan Verner Nielsen.
At the beginning of this Olympiad there were only couple of boats, but now the number has increased to over 20. We are specially delighted that juniors have purchased boats and have started training in the Finn. The London Olympics Finn sailing with FIN flag flying up to the medal race with Tapio Nirkko, had good TV coverage and the Finn as a Olympic class became well known all over the country.

The Swedish championship regatta is also included in the Finnish ranking series, along with three local regattas. Harri Kokko was the overall Finnish Finn Ranking winner.

Finnish Finn Ranking 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
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Photos: Boats sailed at Olympics 2008 vs 1952, Helsinki Boat Show 2012 • Finnish Championship 2012 (l-r) Henri Koski, Thomas Hacklin, Harri Kokko • Ranking winner, Silver in SWE and FIN Nationals, Harri Kokko

The Finnish nationals were sailed in July with 13 boats. Gold and silver medals had great competition with Thomas Hacklin and Harri Kokko. For the bronze medal three men ended on equal points and finally Henry Koski took the medal home.

The FIN fleet wants to have more interaction with our neighbours and the Finnish Finns have participated in the Swedish and Danish national championships. In Sweden where Harri Kokko won the bronze medal we had seven sailors and in Denmark we had two sailors. Seppo Ajanko won series for over-60-year-old boys.

The Swedish championship regatta is also included in the Finnish ranking series, along with three local regattas. Harri Kokko was the overall Finnish Finn Ranking winner.

Finnish Championship 2012

Helsinki 30.6-1.7 2012

<table>
<thead>
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We are gaining new Finn sailors from all areas of sailing. Six to seven years ago, we were gaining mainly in the Grandmaster-Class, attracting club fellows by showing them the advantages of the easy to maintain and easy to handle Finn. A few of those new entries made it into the German Ranking list, which requires to have sailed at least nine countable races. At this time the class decided to set up the Finn Team Germany to enable young sailors competing on international level. In the last two or three years, the structure of the ‘newcomers’ changed, and the new sailors at the Finn regattas in Germany are mainly very experienced racers coming from three different groups:

• ‘Upcomers’ from other classes who are now looking for a new challenge on a non-professional sailing level – typically former Laser sailors around 30 years old after

(i.e. Sebastian Schmid-Klügmann second Warnemünde and Travemünde Sailing Week, second Kehrtau Steinhude)

• ‘Returners’ who have been very successful Finn sailors a decade ago, and are now coming back into the class after they have realised that there were missing an important part of their life. Most of them are very good sailors and are enjoying their ‘younger’ master scene a lot. (i.e. Martin Hoffmann, away from the Finn about 12 years, first Travemünde Woche, eighth Steinhude in spring)

• ‘Switchers who switched classes because the Finn is a brand for ‘no-crew-hassle’, lots of regattas, high quality sailing, growing fields, great comradeship, international fields. (i.e. Uli Breuer, third Masters 2011, fourth Masters 2012)

Basically it does not matter from which ‘group’ the newbie comes from, the ‘established Finnster can never be sure that these unknown faces will not be in front of him.

Since the development in a sailing class is a result of class activities undertaken maybe years ago, it is not easy to find out, why we the Finn class is still doing so good and other classes are suffering.

Was it the founding of the Finn–Team – Germany (which lead to a significant press awareness in Germany)? Was it because local Finn sailors are very engaged ‘selling’ their class to club fellows, or was it just the colourful design of boats and sails? Maybe it’s altogether and we are the lucky ones to have the right combination.

A proof that this combination works – and that I am not exaggerating – is that the German Championship which will be held in October at Lake Starnberg in Bavaria has 111 sailor registrations. (The results can be seen in the next Finnfare.)

See you on the water

Bollo GER 19

Finnland 1952

Matti Nirkko writes: 60 years ago the Finn fleet was racing at the Olympic Games in Helsinki. This year the Finnish Championship was sailed on the same water. The year of the FIN fleet kicked off at the Helsinki Boat Show where 60 years of Finn Olympic sailing was demonstrated by two boats: the original 1952 Olympic boat L-20 and the boat sailed at the Games in Beijing 2008. The wooden L-20 was sailed at the Helsinki Olympics by Norwegian Morits Skaugen to sixth position. All the 1952 boats were built by Borresen in Denmark. The owner of this wooden beauty is our secretary Jukka Alanne.

Finland

Andreas Bollongino writes: While other classes in Germany are suffering a notable decrease in active members, the German Finn Association is still growing.

We are gaining new Finn sailors from all areas of sailing. Six to seven years ago, we were gaining mainly in the Grandmaster-Class, attracting club fellows by showing them the advantages of the easy to handle Finn. A few of those new entries made it into the German Ranking list, which requires to have sailed at least nine countable races. At this time the class decided to set up the Finn Team Germany to enable young sailors competing on international level. In the last two or three years, the structure of the ‘newcomers’ changed, and the new sailors at the Finn regattas in Germany are mainly very experienced racers coming from three different groups:

• ‘Upcomers’ from other classes who are now looking for a new challenge on a non-professional sailing level – typically former Laser sailors around 30 years old after
The 56th Hungarian Finn Championship was held this year at the home of the Finn Class in Hungary, which is at lake Velencei, Agárd, halfway between Budapest and Balaton, close to Székesfehérvár. Altogether 60 competitors from three countries attended the event.

The lake is quite small, therefore the competitors had to sail three laps on the up and down or triangle course. After the opening ceremony there was a short postponement due to strong winds, but it soon calmed down. The first race started with a north-westerly of around 15 knots. Unfortunately the temperatures were not so high and it was rainy, which was almost like the British summer. During the day, the wind speed gradually decreased, but for the last lap in the third race, it was blowing again above 10 knots. At the end of the day, Ian Ainslie was leading with three second places. Márton Beliczay won all three races that day, he had a six point lead over Ian Ainslie. Márton Beliczay was the third with Gaszton Pál and Attila Szilvássy on equal points.

On the last day, there was almost no wind, but some breeze appeared on the lake which looked promising. Before the start Ian and Zsombor were match racing, which looked very exciting. The wind was really gusty and shifty which made the race open until the last metres. Gaszton Pál won the race in front of Zsombor Berecz, which meant Zsombi won his second Finn national title after 2005. Second place went to Ian Ainslie, third to Gaszton Pál. In the juniors fleet Elemér Haidekker won the regatta, while in the masters fleet, Ian Ainslie. Next year the Nationals will be at Balatonfüred, the scheduled date is September 12-15.

For Saturday, the forecast said strong winds above 20 knots, but that only arrived in the last downwind on the second race. Until then, the wind was very tricky and unstable, just under 10 knots. Since Zsombor Berecz won all three races that day, he had a six point lead over Ian Ainslie. Márton Beliczay was the third with Gaszton Pál and Attila Szilvássy on equal points.

The 56th Hungarian Finn Championship was won by the reigning European Champion Ioannis Mitakis from Greece. Ten races were sailed in a beautiful area with all kinds of wind conditions from 5-28 knots. Mitakis won eight races and didn’t have to sail the final race. The other two races were won by Radostin Damianov and Haris Papadopolos.
ITALY

Italian Open Championship

The Italian Championship was held in Scarlino from September 22 to 25 in perfect conditions. A steady south-easterly from 12 to 18 knots allowed all the eight scheduled races to be sailed.

The fight was tough but fair between Giorgio Poggi and Filippo Baldassari, who shared first and second places in all races. It was a real match race, and it was Giorgio who managed to score five bullets and win his fifth Italian title. It was probably an anticipation of the battle for Olympic selection in four years time.

Third was Riccardo Cordovani, back in the Finn after one year spent coaching Lasers. Fourth place went to the Junior Umberto De Luca, a former Laser sailor from Lake Garda, who made his debut on the Finn at the Championship and immediately showed a great potential.

After seven races sailed it was Enrico Passoni who won for the second consecutive time the Master title on equal points with Francesco Cinque, who was very consistent but could win only one race.

Third was Michael Gubi, winner of race 5, and fourth Marco Buglielli who scored two bullets but had a couple of bad races.

The Grand Grand Master champion for the fifth time in a row was Franco Dazzi, seventh overall and very fast in the light winds, as was his rival Antonio Pitini who scored a bullet in the first race.

Two Legends were present and Marco Petroni confirmed his title winning from Martino Rossi Doria from Bracciano.

Italian Master Championship

Anzio offered three nice sunny days for the Italian Master Championship at the beginning of September. Light steady winds in the 6-12 range and plenty of fun for the 38 Masters participating. Michael Gubi, one of the best sailors from Austria and Grand Master World Champion in 2010 was a very welcome guest.

Third was Michael Gubi, winner of race 5, and fourth Marco Buglielli who scored two bullets but had a couple of bad races.

The Grand Grand Master champion for the fifth time in a row was Franco Dazzi, seventh overall and very fast in the light winds, as was his rival Antonio Pitini who scored a bullet in the first race.

Two Legends were present and Marco Petroni confirmed his title winning from Martino Rossi Doria from Bracciano.

Coppa Italia 2012

The sixth event of Coppa Italia Finn 2012 took place in Porto San Giorgio on June 30 and July 1 with 26 Finns.

Three races were sailed on the first day in light winds, which favoured Marco Buglielli who scored two first and a sixth place. The local Girolamo Emiliani won the remaining race in style, leading from the first mark to the finish. Unfortunately on Sunday the wind didn’t cooperate and no races were sailed, leaving Marco Buglielli at the top of the leaderboard (1-6-1), followed by Giorgio Poggi (5-3-4), Marko Kolic (3-2-5), Federico Laici (6-4-6) and Enrico Passoni (4-8-2).

The Saturday evening dinner prepared on the beach by the local Finn sailors guided by Fabio Panaro and Luca Taruschio was memorable.

The last Coppa Italia event will be sailed in Malcesine at the beginning of October at the International Finn Cup - Trofeo Andrea Menoni. The fight for the title will be harsh, with Simone Mancini leading by a small three points margin on Marko Kolic and Federico Laici who trails by another 15 points.

Coppa Italia Finn is supported by a pool of sponsors that offer their products for the final prizewing: Grappa Bertagnolli, Quantum Sail Design Group, 3FL Saildesign, HitechSailing.com, Magic Marine-Tomasoni Fittings, Bertacca Sail Equipment, Essemarine, Residence Ca’ del Lago, Azienda agricola Valpanera, Hotel Piccolo Malcesine.
Ronald Ruiter writes: After the last Finnfare we continued our season with the Vrijbuiter in Loosdrecht. With 40 boats competing, it was a great regatta at our Finn Home Loosdrecht. Karel van Hellemond won, followed by Thierry van Vierssen and Ewout Meijer.

Loosdrecht weekend without sailing. So we went on Saturday. On Sunday the wind was very light winds, only two races were sailed a Loosdrecht weekend. With 30 boats and 10 sailors and

The first week in August we always sail Sneekweek. This is one of Holland’s biggest sailing events. With over 600 boats in more than 30 classes on a relative small lake, it really is a great experience. 22 Finn sailors sailed during six days. It was close racing, with at least four boats able to win the series in the last race. Ronald Ruiter started with a three points lead, but lost the victory to Tijmen van Rootselaar in the last 300 meters to the finish. It’s Tijmen’s first win in a national event, but certainly many to follow. After the second race we all watched the medal race of the Olympics, which was breathtaking for us. We all are very proud of PJ and his fourth place and him going for gold in the last phase of the race. PJ, you’re a great inspiration to us Dutch Finn sailors.

In Loosdrecht there is almost never a weekend without sailing. So we went on with the Loosdrechtweek, which is in fact a Loosdrecht weekend. With 30 boats and very light winds, only two races were sailed on Saturday. On Sunday the wind was totally gone so nothing changed. Ewout Meijer won, followed by Wouter Molenaar and Karel van Hellemont. Relatively new Finn sailor, Robert Thole surprised with a great fourth place.

For the first time in a few years we had a Dutch competitor in the Silver Cup. Tijmen van Rootselaar, only 17 years old, and only 76 kg, was competing in France. We were very proud of his two ninth places on day one and three and his 18th place overall. And this is only the start.

Traditionally a lot of Dutch sailors also sailed in Denmark and Sweden. Almost ten of us joined their national championships, but we are sure our fellow Finn sailors from Denmark and Sweden will tell us more about their result on their local pages.

A few weeks after Sneekweek, the Benelux Championships were held. 24 sailors from Holland and Belgium competed. For the first time in years this event had many competitors. So this is really a recommendation for next year.

Reaching the end of August, we even had two events in one weekend. Our second biggest fleet, WV Randmeer organised the Randmeerrace. 36 sailors had six great races, a great après sailing programme and a great hospitality. Bas de Waal won the Randmeer race for the second time in a row. He was followed by local hero Jelte Baerends and Tijmen van Rootselaar.

In Loosdrecht, Het Witte Huis, had their Club Championships. With 10 sailors and very long courses, Albert Kroon won just before Robert Thole and Henk de Jager. Next year, we hope not to separate our fleet again.

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FINNFARE NOVEMBER 2012
### Warsaw Cup 2012, 9-10 June

Warsaw Cup is a new event organised together with Laser and Europa classes. Zegrze Lake is a well known sailing area in Warsaw. After awesome days of sailing the winner was Piotr Mazur who was back in the class, after collecting experience in other sailing classes. Piotr showed his determination this year. The fight for second place won Piotr Pajor, one point ahead of Jeremi Zimny - our new young sailor who came directly from Europe class.

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### Sopot Finn Cup 2012, 26-27 August

Sopot is a very important sailing area for Polish Masters, especially ahead of World Masters in 2014. This is why almost every time Polish Finn sailors go to Sopot for competition. This year three younger sailors won in different weather conditions. Milosz Wojewski won from Jeremi Zimny and Lukasz Lesinski.

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### Open Polish Masters Championship

Charyzkowy, 1-2 September

The Open Polish Masters Championship was sailed at small Lake Charyzkowy close to Chojnice. The choice of venue, two years before World Masters Championship in Sopot was done because of general plan to popularise Finn sailing in Poland. Typically for small lake in different weather conditions, only seven races were races. Boguslaw Nowakowski took five races and won overall. Second, Jaroslav Wojewski, a great local sailor finished ahead of Piotr Pajor. Next year the championship will be hosted by Sopot as a prelude to 2014 World Masters.

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### Academic Polish Championship 2012

Gdansk, Górki Zachodnie 14-16 September

Our younger sailors have their own event too. Piotr Kula had his first event after Olympics. No surprise that he won almost all races and showed his good preparation this season.

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### Warsaw Cup 2012, 9-10 June

Warsaw Cup is a new event organised together with Laser and Europa classes. Zegrze Lake is a well known sailing area in Warsaw. After awesome days of sailing the winner was Piotr Mazur who was back in the class, after collecting experience in other sailing classes. Piotr showed his determination this year. The fight for second place won Piotr Pajor, one point ahead of Jeremi Zimny - our new young sailor who came directly from Europe class.

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After all sailors participated in the Polish Finn Association General Meeting of Members. The new management of Polish Finn Association for 2012-2014: President: Jan Okulicz; Secretary: Piotr Pajor; Treasurer: Boguslaw Nowakowski; Finn Class Coach: Dariusz Czapak; Member of the board: Rafal Szukiet; Member of the board: Michal Jodkowski.

### Timberland Nord Cup 2012, June 29-July 1

New for Finn, but a very famous event for many other sailing classes in Poland, was organise in Gdanski. This year the Finn class was there and despite little wind we showed our two-waves-sign for everybody.

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### Sopot Finn Cup 2012, 26-27 August

Sopot is a very important sailing area for Polish Masters, especially ahead of World Masters in 2014. This is why almost every time Polish Finn sailors go to Sopot for competition. This year three younger sailors won in different weather conditions. Milosz Wojewski won from Jeremi Zimny and Lukasz Lesinski.

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### Open Polish Masters Championship

Charyzkowy, 1-2 September

The Open Polish Masters Championship was sailed at small Lake Charyzkowy close to Chojnice. The choice of venue, two years before World Masters Championship in Sopot was done because of general plan to popularise Finn sailing in Poland. Typically for small lake in different weather conditions, only seven races were races. Boguslaw Nowakowski took five races and won overall. Second, Jaroslav Wojewski, a great local sailor finished ahead of Piotr Pajor. Next year the championship will be hosted by Sopot as a prelude to 2014 World Masters.

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### Academic Polish Championship 2012

Gdansk, Górki Zachodnie 14-16 September

Our younger sailors have their own event too. Piotr Kula had his first event after Olympics. No surprise that he won almost all races and showed his good preparation this season.

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The Waiku Winter Championships over the weekend 1-2 September was the first of these regattas and the 13 boats that turned out for the event so early in the season is evidence of this growth in numbers and interest.

Saturday provided a 12-15 knot north easterly with shifts of up to 40 degrees and gusts punishing those not paying attention. We had the pleasure of hosting Matt Coutts for the two days and he reinforced his reputation as NZ’s best Finn sailor currently (now that Dan is in retirement). Day one didn’t go all Matt’s way with a 1,1,2 result.

Ray Hall writes: This summer is shaping up to be the busiest yet for the NZ Finn fleet with 10 regattas planned for both the North and South Islands including the addition of the Hurricane Classic in Wellington. This increase in activity is a reflection of the continued growth in the Finn Fleet here. Seven new Devots have been imported into NZ and new sailors have joined the class from various sources creating a very competitive landscape.
Open Russian 2012
On September 2nd a fleet of 100 new Finns prepared to start at Moscow Sailing School. But this time it was not the start of a race, but of the prizegiving ceremony. The boats were built by the famous Russian national factory Gzhel as a prize for every participant of the Open Russian 2012.

The Open Russian Finn Association championship attracted 69 sailors from 14 areas and cities of Russia, and from abroad. The youngest sailor was just 14 years old (Ivan Kupovykh from St. Petersburg) while the oldest one – Victor Kozlov was 78 in September. Some foreign sailors like Lennart Luttkus from Germany came to Moscow to train with his Russian friends as well as to prepare for the International University Sailing Cup, next year in Moscow. Another sailor from Byelorussia, Kontantin Lashuk, has moved from Minsk to Moscow to have good practice in competition every day since the Moscow Finn fleet has a very intensive regatta calendar.

The Open Russian included three other competitions: the junior championship, masters championship and the Russian National University Sailing Championship. 20 juniors struggled for the main prize – a new sail (presented by the Russian Finn Association to support talented juniors).

Eduard Skornyakov came to the regatta from the Olympics to share his experience with other sailors as well as to train in a big fleet in the lake conditions. Not only him, but many other talented Russian sailors formed a very strong fleet with 25-30 sailors in with a chance to be in the top 10.

The regatta was four days of fleet racing, with 12 races, and one day for the medal race. The organisers and competitors got lucky with windy conditions across whole regatta with a northerly wind of 10-20 knots, gusting 25. The competition developed with instant intrigue as the leaders changed every day. A junior Andrey Yanitskiy led after day one, while next day he had to pass it to another junior Arkady Kistanov. Later the senior sailors took over and Skornyakov moved into first place.

Skornyakov showed his class in the lake conditions and won three races on the last day. He built up big margin, which was enough to take the Gold before the medal race. The medal race was a very tough struggle. Egor Terpigoriev won the race over Yanitskiy and Konstantin Lashuk.
Steckborn Regatta 2012
August 25-26
Three perfect races on Saturday with force 2-4 and three hard core races on Sunday with force 6-7 – and all that in warm summer weather. What else do you need for a perfect weekend? Beat Heinz won all three races on Sunday and also was the overall winner, followed by Boris Kulpe and Jean Pierre Weber.

1  SUI 55  Beat Heinz  8
2  SUI 28  Boris Kulpe  11
3  SUI 69  Jean Pierre Weber  21
4  SUI 41  Peter Rösti  23
5  FRA 40  Joseph Rochet  29
6  SUI 11  Hans Fatzer  33
7  SUI 63  Thomas Gautschi  35
8  SUI 4  Jiri Huracek  38
9  SUI 17  Lukas Schenk  41

The weather forecast predicted decreasing winds so the first day with a steady easterly breeze was used to sail three races. After a few years with only occasional Finn sailing Christoph Burger was back on the water in a brand new Finn. And it was a comeback in convincing style – three races with three wins. The usual suspects for the podium Christoph Christen and Peter Theurer couldn’t keep up and had to settle for second and third place.

The next three days were mainly spent waiting on shore or on the water. Luckily a fourth race in very light winds could be sailed to validate the championship. The winner was Stefan Kreiss from Germany. Nothing changed in the top three and when the championship was closed on Sunday at noon Christoph Burger was celebrating his well-deserved first Swiss title.

The Swiss Finn class was very happy to welcome some new sailors among them Piet and Jan Eckert, Olympic sailors in the Flying Dutchman in 1992. They both sailed an excellent championship finishing fifth and seventh, while Xavier Rohart a former Finn sailor won the Star class in convincing style.

1  SUI 7  Christoph Burger  3
2  SUI 5  Christoph Christen  9
3  SUI 67  Peter Theurer  10
4  GER 65  Stefan Kreiss  12
5  SUI 86  Piet F. Eckert  12
6  GER 8  Jürgen Eiermann  13
7  SUI 85  Jan Eckert  19
8  SUI 71  Beat Aebischer  22
9  SUI 55  Beat U. Heinz  24
10  SUI 28  Boris Kulpe  25
11  SUI 63  Thomas Gautschi  25

A big struggle developed in the masters, and this time the defender, Igor Khoroshilov, lost his title to Felix Denikaev. Yury Polivinik won the Grand-Grand-Masters category, Felix Denikaev won the Grand-Masters, while Vasily Kravchenko was the first Master.

In summary, the Open Russian has become a traditional annual big festival of the Finn class. It attracts more and more people every year. There is a big response to this event in Russian regions and we foresee more than 75 competitors next year. Moscow Sailing School together with Russian Finn Association provide unique conditions for charter, accommodation and meals, while Klyzminskoye lake near Moscow presents unique conditions. We will be glad to see sailors from other countries next year. Open Russian 2013 is planned for September 3-8.
California Lake Championship
July 2012, Huntington Lake, California
Charles Heimler writes: Henry Sprague, Erik Lidecis, and Darrell Peck took the podium spots at this year’s regatta which has a 50 year history of consistent winds at 7,000 foot elevation on a California Sierra Nevada mountain lake.

The event has been a perennial success in its current form, having been revived by the Finn Club of California. Next year’s event scheduled for late July is already in the planning and will be part of the new California Olympic Finn Championship Series, culminating in the US National Championships on the America’s Cup course on San Francisco Bay.

Sprague has sailed this lake many times over the course of his 50-year Finn career, and has an uncanny knack to find the shortcuts. Lidecis is having a burst of successful Finn outings, parlaying some expert coaching by Ed Wright into some blazing downwind speed. Peck, holder of more Finn regattas than any North American Finn sailor, is still on the money, even after a hiatus to coach Olympic hopefuls.

North American Championship
August 2012, CORK, Kingston, Canada.
Greg Douglas, lately Canada’s Olympic representative in the London Games, and Martin Robitaille, Quebec’s young adult Olympic hopefuls, took until the last race of a 14 race series to decide the win in favour of Douglas when the “O” conditions light was turned on for the last downwind leg.

The regatta this year was a homecoming for both Douglas and Robitaille as they have sailed these waters at this time of year in the CORK regatta, the capstone of each year’s Canadian summer season, since their Optimist Dinghy and Laser Days. Perennial Finn maven American Darrell Peck, twenty years senior to the young Canadian, earned the bronze while American Gordon Lamphere of the US Sailing Development Team was fourth.

Kingston had typical conditions with wind, sun, and nice water for the best time in a decade. The famous Lake Ontario sea breeze generated by the heat of the limestone quarries north of the city generated winds of 12-18 knots for all but one race. New to this year was the Stadium Course near the harbour seawall, an innovation developed by the CORK organisers to introduce spectator viewing.

More details and regatta links can be found on www.sailing.org or on www.finnclass.org
MAXX Your Performance

Congratulations to Jon Lobert for a well deserved bronze. Four sails out of ten in the Medal Race were yellow MAXX-sails from WB. Proven performance at top level combined with exceptional durability.

WB-Sails Ltd, Helsinki, Finland  www.wb-sails.fi  info@wb-sails.fi  Tel. +3589 621 5055