

International 49er Class Associations

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SEIKO 49er Worlds - And They're Off!

Evening showers broke to a cloudy day with light winds keeping anxious sailors onshore for the first day of racing for the SEIKO 49er World Championship in Zadar, Croatia.

After a few hours the race committee released the sailors for three races each in the three qualifying flights. With varying and shifting winds that eventually settled into a nice afternoon seabreeze of 8-11 knots the 74 boats took turns and completed enough races for a full day's racing.

After three races early regatta leaders Lukasz Przybytek and Pawel Kolodzinski (POL) are tied with Tobias Schadewaldt and Hannes Baumann (GER) with 10 points. One point behind is a 3-way tie with Bermuda brothers Jesse and Zander Kirkland, Justus Schmidt and Max Boehme (GER) and Peter Burling and Blair Tuke (NZL).

With Bermuda hoping to take one of the 5 qualification spots for the 2012 Olympic Games, skipper Jesse Kirkland explained their strategy; "we went into the day with a simple plan of top 10 finishes." He explained further that "we've been here for a week training and the conditions have been similar with a soft northwesterly, so the conditions were perfect to our training" Although early in the regatta, Jesse made a point to mention his thanks to "the many supporters back home as well as some Bermudian friends here supporting us as well." Preparation and a cheering squad couldn't be better!

The forecast for tomorrow's racing looks rewarding with more consistent wind of 10-15 knots and clear skies.

Follow the action on www.49erworlds.org with the qualifying series continuing through May 9 and the prizegiving on May 12.

Photos: credit Nikola Sisko

Photo 5790: Bermuda brothers Jesse and Zander Kirkland concentrate around the track.

Photo 5565: Current regatta leaders Poland's Lukasz Przybytek and Pawel Kolodzinski.

Photo 5297: Germany's Tobias Schadewaldt and Hannes Baumann

About Seiko

SEIKO has been the main sponsor of the International 49er Class since 2006. Through this agreement, SEIKO has assisted the growth of the sport and has supported the future development of the 49er sailing through the supply of funds and equipment to the new generation of sailors. In return, SEIKO has gained valuable insights into the needs and wishes of the top athletes in world sailing, and is incorporating this knowledge into each new generation of Velatura, its marine watch collection.