



On July 23rd five sailors, one coach and one house parent left Heathrow for San Francisco to take part in the Laser 4.7 Worlds for Under 19's. The cunning plan of putting tillers and tiller extensions in a tube inside a golf travel bag worked well as the airlines are happy to accept these as a second bag and you can get lots of kit in them; useful when members of the team had over weight bags for the return journey. The team consisted of two U17's, David Pain and Dan Bullock, and two U16's, Ollie Sellers and Anthony Parke, and one girl, Johanna Asplund whose mum had the hard task of house parent.

After a good nights sleep and some time adjustment we picked up our boats and, with the help of some photos of our own boats at home, managed to rig all our lines and pulleys. We had a shake down sail but had to leave our coach, Kirsty, on the shore as the GBR windsurfing team were still using the rib for their last day of racing. Watching them fill the podium with GBR in top positions at their prize giving we could only hope we might manage to do the same.

Two days of training and some long walks to see the sights then we were into the racing. At the end of the first day it looked as if David could be winning with a 2nd and a 1st only to find he was a victim to the strong tide and was OCS in the second race.

On the Second day it was time for the boys to start at 11:00 and that meant we would be racing both our races in a strong flooding tide. This meant that Johanna started at 2:00 and would be racing in the stronger afternoon winds and a strong ebbing tide. The race schedule had the girls and boys fleets swapping from am to pm so they all had different winds and tides to deal with.

The whole team worked hard to contend with the tides which could be running at 4.5 knots and found themselves on occasions, when the wind was light, having to sail downwind away from the line in the preparatory period to avoid crossing the line, as soon as the boats turned towards the line they were over.

Anthony had an interesting race six when his kicker came off the mast at the last windward mark ,he was lying 5th, and he still had twenty minutes of downwind leg followed by two reaches and a short beat. He managed to finish in the teens with a missing pin and a bent kicker base.

After 8 races the boys split into Gold and Silver fleets with Anthony and David in Gold with James Hazelwood who went independently of the RYA team to represent GBR. Dan and Ollie were in Silver with Freddie Verbaugt, the second independent. The girls continued to sail as one fleet.

They finished the week in style, Ollie with a 2nd in the last race and Dan with a 7th overall. David had a cracking start and raced hard in the 20kt winds and big seas to have a good finish to his week. Anthony secured his top 15 he needed to get on the podium- and with it the Under 16 Silver position.

“It has been a long event in terms of the discipline needed to race in these conditions, they have needed to race on effectively a big and very tidal river, they haven't had the chance to tack off if the start wasn't so good, as the losses would have been too great with the tide, they've had to roll their sleeves up and get involved with fighting for the bias end, so they have all learnt a huge amount I think.”

(quote from Kirsty Bonar coach for the event)

The Europeans dominated the event with the top two positions going to Spain; third place was lost to them when a Spanish sailor had to carry a DNE in his results. Local writers commented on the general good conduct of the teams and how much they all impressed the locals both on and off the water, they also questioned the fact that the USA don't have a bigger following of the 4.7.

Overall results

Under 19

1st Francisco Gonzalez Sammarco ESP

2nd Carlos Rosello ESP

16th Nils Thenick SUI

19th Anthony Parke GBR

29th David Pain GBR

38th James Hazelwood GBR

Under 16

1st Nils Theunik SUI

2nd Anthony Parke GBR

Silver Fleet

7th Dan Bullock GBR

20th Ollie sellers GBR

24th Freddie Verbaugt GBR

Girls fleet

26th Johanna Asplund GBR full results on St.Francis Yacht Club site

