



Fullpower Melges 24 World Championship 2007

Santa Cruz Yacht Club

Santa Cruz, Calif., USA
May 9, 2007

May 3-12

Wednesday's weather: wind 5-14k SW, waves 2-3 ft., swell 2 ft., temp. 68 F.
Thursday's forecast: wind W 10-15k, waves 2-3 ft., swell 2-4 ft., temp. 71 F.

Wins are nice, but consistency pays for Porter

SANTA CRUZ, Calif.---As inconspicuous as one can be at 6-foot-7 and 225 pounds and with the class's namesake calling tactics, Brian Porter and his team from America's heartland have quietly moved into first place in the 2007 Fullpower Melges 24 World Championship, hosted by the Santa Cruz Yacht Club.

Francois Brenac, the opening day co-leader sailing Benjamin Cohen's French entry, led the 58-boat fleet across the finish line in Wednesday's second race but was disqualified for failing to re-start after starting early.

That misstep elevated Porter, of Winnetka, Ill., to the top as the only boat with all single-digit finishes: 3-5-3-6 for 17 points, eight ahead of defending champion Nicola Celon of Italy.

Dave Ullman of Santa Ana, Calif. posted his second consecutive win by a full minute in Wednesday's first race but slipped to 11th in the second.

Porter's tactician is Harry Melges III, who won the 2002 Melges 24 Worlds at Travemunde, Germany, and his brother John and Andy Burdick---class veterans all---complete the crew.

"We've had three good starts so far," Porter said, "then a horrible start in the last race. But we got lucky when [the wind] came left. We started to go back to the right---80 per cent of the time on a normal day at Santa Cruz that's the place to be---and Harry saw some more wind on the left."

With the wind shifting, most of the fleet wound up in the middle of the course on the third and last beat because, Porter said, "I don't think anybody knew where to go."

Wednesday's races were sailed in southwest winds of 5-14 knots with a ring of light fog around the course partially obscuring the shores of Monterey Bay. Each race had a general recall before getting under way under I-flags, plus a Z-flag calling for a 20 per cent penalty for starting early.

But Brenac took the worst hit. Apparently headed for his second win in two days, he heard no finishing horn as he crossed the line 28 seconds ahead of Stuart Simpson's boat The Barbarians from the UK. Later, he was recorded as OCS (on course side) at the start but failed to return, calling for disqualification and handing the victory to Simpson.

Nine boats started early but three, including Brenac, failed to return.

"I don't know why he didn't re-start," principal race officer Hank Stuart said. "His [bow number 28] was called twice on the radio."

Brenac was not immediately available for comment.

Joe Fly helmsman Gabrio Zandona could empathize with his rival. The Italians, expected to be title contenders here, had to re-start both of Tuesday's races and logged a 28 and a 24. They came back Wednesday with a 9 and 6, but Zandona wasn't encouraged because there is only one throwout in the 10-race schedule.

"We had nice starts today," Zandona said with half a smile, "so we had a chance to make a race. But we are out of the game."

Samuel (Shark) Kahn, the 2003 champion, also bounced back with an 11 and a 9 after a similar double starting bobble Tuesday---a 29 and a 23---and shares Joe Fly's predicament.

Meanwhile, Mark (Crusty) Christensen of Santa Cruz leads the four-boat Team Pegasus effort in third place, although his entry was almost an afterthought. Christensen's crew is Pete Spaulding, Brian Lee, Arthur Kinsolving and Shane Iliidge. All but Spaulding---a fifth-place finisher in the 2004 Olympics sailing a 49er---work fulltime for Fullpower, the title sponsor.

"We didn't have very high expectations because the first time we've sailed together was in the Pre-Worlds," Christensen said. "I had sort of stopped sailing."

"Then Philippe [Kahn] said, 'If you like you can take my old boat,' so I thought it could be fun."

Racing continues through Saturday. The only throwout kicks in after the sixth race Thursday, which could scramble the upper echelon.

The leaders



Mark Christensen: Team Pegasus entry in third place



Italy's Cesare Bressan (I.) crosses rival in lumpy Monterey Bay

Complete results

Photo gallery

Regatta information

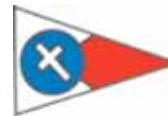


Entry list

International Melges 24 class information



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Melges 24 world champions

2006, Hyeres, France
Nicola Celon, Italy

2005, Key Largo, Fla.
James Spithill, Australia

(After 4 of 10 races)

1. Brian Porter, Winnetka, Ill., 3-5-3-5, 16 points.
2. Nicola Celon, Italy, 4-2-16-2, 24.
3. Mark Christensen, Santa Cruz, Calif., 16-3-2-8, 29.
4. 4. Dave Ullman, Santa Ana, Calif., 18-1-1-11, 31.
5. Stuart Simpson, UK, 14-12-6-1, 33.
6. John Pollard, UK, 8-6-10-12, 36.
7. Bruce Ayres, Newport Beach, Calif., 1-7-17-16, 41.
8. Othmar Mueller von Blumencron, Great Falls, Va., 6-9-23-4, 42.
9. Andrea Racchelli, Italy, 13-10-4-15, 42.
10. Eddy Eich, Germany, 10-18-14-7, 49.

Complete results

All regatta information is available at www.melges24worlds2007.com . Further information about the International Melges 24 Class is available from www.melges24.com

Information on Melges 24 events in the U.S. is available at <http://www.usmelges24.com/>

Fullpower Technologies is a new wireless nanotechnology biotech company based in Santa Cruz.

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2004, Marstrand, Sweden
Sebastian Col, France

2003, San Francisco
Samuel (Shark) Kahn, U.S.

2002, Travemunde, Germany
Harry Meiges, U.S.

2001, Key West, Fla.
Flavio Favini, Switzerland

2000, La Rochelle, France
Georgio Zuccoli, Italy

1999, Long Beach, California
Vince Brun, U.S.

1998, Torquay, England
Vince Brun, U.S.

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