



# Fullpower Melges 24 World Championship 2007

Santa Cruz Yacht Club

Santa Cruz, Calif., USA

May 3-12

Jan. 24, 2007

## Italian armada zeros in on Santa Cruz

SANTA CRUZ, Calif.---Heads up! The Italians are coming.

Not only defending champion Nicola Celon but last week's Acura Key West Race Week winning skipper, Riccardo Simoneschi, will be among what is arguably the world's strongest national fleet in the *Fullpower Melges 24* World Championship for 2007 scheduled May 3-12, hosted by the Santa Cruz Yacht Club.

In the 2006 Worlds at Hyeres, France, six of the top 12 finishers among 119 boats were from Italy, with Celon on top and Simoneschi 11th.

At Key West, in the largest class of 47 boats, Italy's Gabrio Zandonà led all week until Simoneschi charged back from eight points down in fourth place to win the ninth and last race and earn the Boat of the Week award among 260 entries in 18 classes---his biggest win in his third year in the class, following similar success on the Star, IMS and TP 52 circuits. His crew on ITA-693 Giacomel Audi Racing were tactician Matteo Ivaldi, Giorgio Tortarolo, Lucy Giorgetti and Vittorio Rochelli. Celon did not compete at Key West.

"Everyone coming from the Olympic classes knows it's not finished until it's finished," Simoneschi said this week. "In a fleet of 50 or more boats, eight points is nothing. We are used to that. Last year we were first until the last day and we finished fourth."

Simoneschi was a top competitor and president of the International Star Class for 11 years until 2005, when he started sailing a Melges 24. He is now Vice Chairman of the International Sailing Federation (ISAF) Equipment Committee.

"We make decisions and proposals to the council," he said -- but although he once fought to keep the Star in the Olympics, one proposal he isn't likely to be forward is to make the Melges 24 an Olympic class.

"I think until there's a new keelboat class that fits with the request of the [International Olympic Committee] the Star will stay there," he said.

The IOC limits the total number of Olympic sailors to 380, so boats with crews of more than two or three crew--Melges 24s are sailed with four or five---won't fit.

"It would be a fantastic challenge for the boat because it's very modern and fast," said Simoneschi, who became Vice Chairman (Europe) of the International Melges 24 Class Association in September. "A few years ago I made a proposal that the Melges 24 should be used for team racing with the winners of the events, but the IOC apparently doesn't like this idea.

"I don't think that's too bad. I don't think it's wise for the Melges to become an Olympic class. As soon as it would become Olympic the costs of campaigning would increase. When I was sailing an Olympic campaign [in a Star] I was sailing 300 days a year---two days off and five days on the water."

As for Santa Cruz, Simoneschi said, "I expect it will be quite windy."

The Italians seem to revel in big breeze.

"We have a very good [national] championship and we are competing a lot one against the other," he said. "This has increased the level. Four or five of us have experience in



Riccardo Simoneschi at Key West  
Photo by JH Peterson

## Regatta information



## 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
- 2004, Marstrand, Sweden  
Sebastian Col, France
- 2003, San Francisco  
Samuel (Shark) Kahn, U.S.
- 2002, Travemunde, Germany  
Harry Melges, U.S.
- 2001, Key West, Fla.  
Flavio Favini, Switzerland
- 2000, La Rochelle, France  
Giorgio Zuccoli, Italy
- 1999, Long Beach, California  
Vince Brun, U.S.
- 1998, Torquay, England  
Vince Brun, U.S.

Olympic campaigns, IMS sailing, TP 52s . . . professional sailing for a long time."

But don't look for the Italians to be doing any team racing to help one another at Santa Cruz.

"Sailing is an individual sport," Simoneschi said. "It doesn't matter if the other boat is Italian. You have to win."

The event starts with registration on May 3. Four pre-Worlds races will be run on May 5 and 6, and five days of championship racing, with two races a day, are scheduled May 8-12.

Full information, including Notice of Race, entry form and media info and registration, will be available at [www.melges24worlds2007.com](http://www.melges24worlds2007.com). Further information about the International Melges 24 Class is available from [www.melges24.com](http://www.melges24.com).

Information on Melges 24 events in the U.S., including the weekend's U.S. Nationals, is available at <http://www.usmelges24.com/>

[Fullpower Technologies](#) is a new wireless nanotechnology biotech company based in Santa Cruz.

**Press Officer**

Rich Roberts  
(310) 835-2526  
Cell (310) 766-6547  
richsail@earthlink.net  
**IMCA Press Officer**

Fiona Brown  
fiona.brown@melges24.com  
Mobile +44 (0) 7711 718470  
www.melges24.com

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