



Fullpower Melges 24 World Championship 2007

Santa Cruz Yacht Club

Santa Cruz, Calif., USA

May 3-12

May 4, 2007

Melges 24 Worlds racers test the waters this weekend

SANTA CRUZ, Calif.--Like anxious gladiators sizing up the Roman Colosseum, the 58 entries in the 2007 Fullpower Melges 24 World Championship take to Monterey Bay Saturday and Sunday for the "Pre-Worlds" prelude.

The lions will be turned loose on the same growling waters next Tuesday for five days of serious racing in the class's 10th international classic, hosted by the Santa Cruz Yacht Club.

Eddy Eich, the reigning European Corinthian (amateur) champion, said, "The waves are bigger here than what we are used to in the Mediterranean. We have to tune up our boat for conditions here. We have to stiffen it up. People are using more tension on uppers and lowers [shrouds]. Hopefully, it will be windy [this weekend]. In light air we don't have a problem, but we need some exercise in windy conditions."

Eich, a world 6-Meter champion in 2005 who finished ninth in last year's North American Championship here, will also try to line up with top contenders to "see how quick they go and try to tune our boat to get similar speed."

Winning is not a priority right now.

"The Pre-Worlds have nothing to do with the Worlds," Eich said.

Meanwhile, Vince Brun of San Diego, who won the first two Melges 24 Worlds in 1998 and '99, withdrew after suffering a shoulder injury.

Chris Larson, an America's Cup and Volvo Ocean Race veteran from Annapolis, offered a scientific insight into the prevailing conditions: It's the water. The temperature of Monterey Bay generally runs in the mid-50s (F.) this time of year.

"We've been here a few days and seen the conditions that are Santa Cruz's claim to fame," Larson said. "It's been cool and windy and the air is very dense because of the cool water temperature. The cold water will allow the air to sink lower and the density makes the wind stronger."

Larson quipped, "It's so much fun sailing downwind that it's too bad we don't sail [with a race course] two miles downwind and one mile upwind."

Larson said a Melges 24 will do up to 17 knots downwind in 20 knots of wind.

"The limiting factor is the waves," he said. "You're going over one and planing into another one, and everyone on the boat is hanging on for dear life."

Cedric Pouligny of France, who will be driving Mojo for a British crew that includes owner Miles Quinton, was less concerned with conditions than performance.

"We're a brand new team this year, so we have no objective except to maximize what we do," he said.

The team this year launched a four-year campaign aimed at eventually winning the Worlds. Pouligny won the Melges 24 European title in 2001 and was part of the 2004 Worlds winning crew in Marstrand, Sweden, with helm Seb Col aboard Philip Ligo's Partner & Partners (P&P

Quinton said, "We've all sailed Melges for awhile but we're still very young as a team. It is useful when you sail against the top boats. When we did Key West it was light to moderate and that was pretty good. We were 11th out of 60 boats. A lot of the same competitors are here, [and] all although there aren't as many boats as there have been in Europe, all of the top Europeans are here. The top 20 is going to be just as intense."

The Santa Cruz YC hosts a full schedule of activities planned ashore. The hospitality will include on-site concessions run by local businesses offering specialty coffee and pastries by Java Junction, pre-ordered race lunches by Erik's DeliCafé and bottled water by Crystal Springs, available by the case.

There also will be post-race social events, with complimentary beverage most evenings provided by sponsors like Sierra Nevada, Pusser's Rum and Seabright Brewery. Hors d'oeuvres will be available each night, with dinners on two nights, featuring Polynesian specialties from Aloha Grill and BBQ d tri-tip by club member/restaurateur Walter Oliveri of Aldo's.

There will be daily prizes for top-place finishers, sponsored by Harken, and giveaways from Pusser's Rum, West Marine, Starbrite and New England Ropes. There will also be some great raffle prizes, including a custom M/24 transport cover from Lohmann Sails and Covers. North Sails is providing skipper's bags, and all participants will receive discount tickets to the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk.



Launching boats and measuring sails was order of business Friday



Chris Larson a cold water warrior



New team in town: Miles Quinton and helmsman Cedric Pouligny

Regatta information



Lodging

Entry list

International Melges 24 class information



Full information, including Notice of Race, entry form and media info and registration, will be 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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Visit the Santa Cruz Yacht Club



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Melges 24 world champions

2006, Hyeres, France
Nicola Celoni, 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
Georgio Zuccoli, Italy

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

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

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