



Allegro European Formula Championships- Poland '08.

Gonzo reports . . .



Back from Fuerteventura PWA Slalom, Ross, Arnon and me got picked by Ceri from all different airports in Germany. A mission it was but we all new it was gonna be worth it... again!

I got picked up last at Berlin. After a 45 minute drive we felt this funny feeling we have every year when the roads suddenly became a little bit bumpy and the van loaded, at an extreme, started bouncing all over the place - back in Poland we all said!!!

However that last bit of road on the Germany side does not represent at all what Poland has come to. Poland has become part of the EU not long ago and you can easily notice it.

One of the signs that the event was gonna be even bigger this year was that Shaggy was gonna close the prize giving and start the party - not bad! Allegro, the main sponsor, surprised us again.

I've done many events where we were treated as professional sailors...but this one.....wow....everything you could imagine was there - computers at the beach, endless food, drinks, VIP tent for the sailors to rest. Concerts every night. Shows and movies every late afternoons. Social events the sailors could share with the Polish crowds. Great atmosphere.

Many times Leba has made us suffer - having some days without any racing, but not this year. The first day threatened us a no wind appearance, but all changed during the week making us have 13 races for the men and 11 for men silver and women.

128 men and 9 women battled all these days for the European titles and it was one long battle until the end on the men's gold division. I saw many new faces and many good sailors, especially from the eastern countries.

The split fleet of the first days brought some complaints, as always, but no one could question the result out of the system after some 6 fair races come through to make the cut of gold and silver.

When the Gold series started there were many sailors at the top that had a chance for the title: Denis Littel was having probably the best event of his life scoring only 2nd and 1st places. He seemed unbeatable at that moment. Jesper Vesterstrom was close to him with some bullets and some 2nds... A bit far back were Steve, Ross and I, waiting for some future mistakes by the leaders....behind us Arnon, Willhelm, Wojtec and Pawel, all very close.



Gold races started and it was Ross who struck back with two bullets. Jesper and Steve managed to have some good results, and I... got over early once more and got stuck without planing on the second gold race.!

The leader, Dennis, had a bad start of the day with a DNF but still managed to have some good late afternoon races, scoring a 2nd, 1st and 4th, still solid on the lead.

Being a Saturday night at Allegro Poland Europeans Championships it was a must to go down to the beach to check the night scene. There was a talent show where every participant had 30 seconds to show their skills. The beach was packed again. The winner was Paulo dos Reis, BRA3333, showing us how good a Capoiiera fighter or "dancer" he is.

The last day of the event was one to remember. Still a big fight for the lead. The organisers and the sponsors wanted the wind to come to see the great final. We had a light wind race with offshore winds that probably nobody thought that was gonna happen. But again the race crew was on it and pulled it off.

I won that one, got rid of the 32 with one more discard so got back to 5th. Far from the top places i could see the battle of my good opponents. Jesper that was leading

got 5th and Steve that was coming 5th for most of the race made a huge come back to 2nd to show that is “not over until the fat lady sings”!!!!

Back to the beach, sitting on 5th and only being able to lose i was hoping for the wind to come just to see who would take the event! Still Dennis, Jesper, Ross and Steve really close, me 5th.

1630, just an hour and half to go to the end, the wind came strong..solid 20 knots. The silver and women went out and then we had two races back to back. The organisers and the race crew wanted to show us that they would take advantage of every single breeze that would come and they were gonna squeeze maximum races possible into the championship !!!!

Back on the water, strong wind, many guys stuck on 12sq.m...I could see that Steve was on 11 but all the main guys on 12s...I was winning that race with quite a big lead until the last gybe where i almost fell.. Wojtec managed to catch up and passed me to take the finish ...I was really uncertain where it was. Steve passed me as well as we both got mistaken and went to the wrong one and he realised first it was somewhere else. Dennis got another DNF, Jesper 12 and Ross a 9th...this was getting too much to handle!!!!!!

Into the last race anybody of these 4 guys could win. After the first upwind and downwind we rounded like this: Steve, Me, Wojtec, Ross and Pawel...all really close to each other. Ross pushed the pedal down and flew past Steve and me. Wojtec managed to pass us too.



They both tacked and and it seemed that Ross was gonna make the mark but at the last moment he got headed and had to double tack leaving Wojtec on first. I passed Steve on the double tack. so far: Wojtec, Ross, me, Steve, Pawel...at the last downwind i cooked the gybe and Steve and Pawel passed me.

There were no signs of Dennis and Jesper so i bet Steve and Ross knew it was between them. They fought that last reach to the finish and Ross managed to take 2nd and Steve 3rd.

Back at the beach, I could'nt believe how everything changed...Ross and Steve were tied in points and Jesper 1 point behind...!!!!

Dennis scored a DNF and a 13 on the last two races that put him back on 4rth. In his

12th race he had a crash with POL16 and he won back a redress that consisted of an average points of the gold races...not enough to be in the podium..



Podium - Steve, Ross and Jesper..showing that every point counts and that you should never abandon a race no matter what. Both Steve and Ross had abandoned a race because they were going bad. If Ross would have finish that race giving the pleasure to some other riders to beat him face to face then he would have been 1st..! As I said IF...

Photos by Łukasz Nazdraczew - www.fotoart.pl

Back to the prize giving, the most important part for many. Shaggy delighted us with a sick concert, followed by a great party at the VIP tent with endless drinks, great DJ and great atmosphere...best event of my life and I didn't even make it on the podium...

Gonzalo Costa Hoevel, ARG3, Neilpryde/Exocet.