



RYA Press Release

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GBR crews take gold and bronze at 49er Europeans



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Britain's 49er sailors proved a dominant force at the European Championship which concluded in Poland on Saturday (10 July), with Chris Draper and Peter Greenhalgh clinching the title and bronze going to teammates Stevie Morrison and Ben Rhodes.

This European gold marks the first major title for Draper and Greenhalgh since they teamed up in 2009 on their return to the class.

The Skandia Team GBR pair made steady progress throughout the regatta to edge into the overall lead on Friday's penultimate day and went into Saturday's medal race with a six point lead.

Draper, the 2004 Olympic bronze medallist, and Greenhalgh finished third in the final double points scoring race, which was enough to hand them their first regatta win together, and Draper's first European title since 2005.

"We're really, really pleased," Draper explained. "We're still a new team and we're learning from that."

“They all say that Olympic campaigning is a marathon, not a sprint, so winning events is bit more than we were perhaps looking for at this stage, we were just aiming for a podium spot here really.



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“But it’s good to be ahead of our goals and to be able to say we’re European Champions. It’s got a nice ring to it!”

“This week we’ve sailed pretty well and have stuck to what we know.” Draper continued.

“It’s now really important that we take the lessons we have learnt from this event forwards and make sure we don’t lose sight of what has made such a good series for us.”

For Stevie Morrison and Ben Rhodes, their bronze medal spot was tinged with disappointment after an unlucky penultimate day saw them lose the overall lead to their Skandia Team GBR teammates.

They finished fourth in Saturday’s medal race to end their regatta in third overall behind France’s Manu Dyen and Stephane Christidis.

“I think we’ll look at this one as the one that got away,” said Morrison.

“We’re pleased with bronze, but at the same time there are a few moments during the event where we know we lost some points. On Friday in particular we were really unlucky when we were in third place just 50m from the finish line and the wind just completely died on us.”

“That said, a month ago we were struggling for pace and not competitive, so it’s great that we’re up there again. We’ve had new kit for this week which we’ve been kind of freestyling with and learning the set-up of as we’ve gone along, so we know there are some more gains to come there as well.”

Skandia Team GBR had a third crew inside the top ten, with Dylan Fletcher and Alain Sign finishing sixth overall.

Paul Brotherton and Mark Asquith, the 2009 European silver medallists, saw a premature end to their regatta as Brotherton sustained a knee injury halfway through the event and was forced to withdraw.

Elsewhere in European Championship action, Bryony Shaw finished seventh at the RS:X European Windsurfing Championships in Sopot, Poland.

The Olympic bronze medallist was positive about her performance, describing it as “good learning week” ahead of next month’s Skandia Sail for Gold Regatta, which is held at the 2012 venue in Weymouth and is what she has been building up to this summer.

“I’m gutted not to have been in the medals, but I’ve raced well this week. I think I’ve got a good all round game, I’m happy with my equipment and my set up and I just need to iron out the little mistakes I’ve made.

“I’m certainly not looking to really change anything.”

Richard Hamilton and Elliot Carney with the top Skandia Team GBR sailors in the men’s fleet, in 33rd and 34th respectively. RS:X World Champion Nick Dempsey did not make the trip to Poland.

For full results from the 49er Europeans, visit <http://www.gdyniasailingdays.org/en/wyniki/49er/>

For full results from the RS:X Europeans, visit <http://sailraces.wikidot.com/rsx2e:latest-results>

For all the latest news on Skandia Team GBR’s sailors in action around the world visit www.skandiateamgbr.com

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