



RYA Press Release

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Wright gains Miami gold while Macgregor settles for silver



Lucy Macgregor, Annie Lush and Ally Martin, Miami OCR Credit: Richard Langdon/Skandia Team GBR

British sailors bagged a total of six medals from the ISAF Sailing World Cup event in Miami which concluded on Saturday (30 January), but there were mixed fortunes within the GBR camp on the final day of racing.

With gold and silver already secured via Nick Thompson and John Robertson's Paralympic Sonar crew, Ed Wright and Giles Scott made it an impressive 1-2 for Skandia Team GBR in the heavyweight Finn class.

But there was disappointment for the match racing trio of Lucy Macgregor, Annie Lush and Ally Martin who missed out on the top prize and settled for silver after a week of dominance in the newest Olympic sailing discipline.

For Ed Wright, the defending champion and 2009 World Cup series winner, Saturday's final medal race was a relatively straightforward affair, with only teammate Scott who had an outside chance of preventing him from his second straight title at this event.

Scott's focus, however, was not on his teammate but instead on defending his silver medal position from American Zach Railey and Gasper Vincec of Slovenia, who were snapping at his heels, leaving Wright with a clear run.

A fourth place from the medal race was more than enough to hand Wright the gold, while Scott successfully fended off the attack from his American rival to clinch the second podium spot.

"It's been a really tough week, I find the venue pretty difficult with some tricky conditions but I'm really happy – it's a great start to the year," said Wright afterwards. "It's just a shame the breeze that was forecast didn't appear today so we haven't had much of a chance to stretch our legs this week!"

"I wish it would have been a gold," confessed Scott. "I feel as if I let Ed get away a bit during the regatta which I wish I hadn't done, but silver's obviously the next best so I'll have to settle for that.

"The medal race was nice and tight – I was surprised that Zach decided to sail for me instead of Gasper, but I felt I dealt with him well and ended up doing enough."

Skandia Team GBR's crop of Finn sailors continue to prove tough to beat, with coach Matt Howard happy with his squad's progress – and particularly Scott's performance in the double-points medal race which have proven a stumbling block for him in the past.

"One of the last things I said to Giles before the race start was just to stay relaxed because when you tense up that's when you start to make rash decisions," Howard explained.

"But certainly by the way he dealt with Zach coming for him in the pre-start it shows he was a lot more relaxed than I've seen him in any other medal race, and hopefully after that display that's an end to the previous medal races where we've had problems and he'll take some confidence from that."

Nick Thompson had already amassed enough of a points margin in the Laser class to secure gold a day early, but for Lucy Macgregor, Annie Lush and Ally Martin there was a nail-biting final in the Elliot 6m women's match event which saw them lose out on the gold to USA's British-born skipper Anna Tunnicliffe.

Having not dropped a match for the entire regatta, the Skandia Team GBR trio were in confident form heading into the final showdown, and won the first two matches to come within touching distance of gold. But the turning point came in the third race when an umpiring decision at the windward mark went against them, opening the door for Tunnicliffe who won the next two to level the tie.

In the decider, Macgregor got off to a strong start, gaining four boat lengths on her opponent by the time they reached the windward mark for the final time, but were then faced with an unexpected loss of speed.

Lush explains: "We rounded the mark, gybed and then just stopped – we were really, really slow and just couldn't get the boat to accelerate."

The British boat had hit some rope debris in the water which tangled itself around the keel slowing them down and losing crucial ground on the downwind leg. The Skandia Team GBR crew lost the decider by just half a boat length and had to settle for silver.

“Anna was a tough opponent and was sailing really well in the conditions today, so credit to her,” Lush continued.

“I can’t say for sure whether we’d have won [if it weren’t for hitting the rope] but it’s unusual for someone to gain that much ground downwind.

“It’s a frustrating finish with silver after we’ve had such a good week. We were faced with new conditions today, light and choppy, which Anna handled better – but we’ll come away with some things to work on.”

The final medal of the day came in the form of bronze for up and coming Laser Radial sailor Alison Young, who exceeded expectations to claim her first ever podium finish at a major senior international event.

“It feels pretty good,” she admitted. “It’s been a good week and getting a medal is a nice little cherry on top!

“This was just kind of a process regatta to see how the winter training has gone and see what we need to still work on before the start of the European regattas, so I would’ve been happy with a top ten.

Elsewhere in medal race action, a tight race in the 470 men’s division left Nic Asher and Elliot Willis having to settle for fourth, while a second place in the RS:X men’s final saw Nick Dempsey pull himself up to fourth overall with Bryony Shaw improving her overnight position one place to finish the regatta in fifth.

“We saw some great finals racing today,” said RYA Olympic Manager Stephen Park.

“After such a strong week and a fantastic battle in the match racing final, it was disappointing for Lucy’s team that they didn’t come away with gold, but Anna Tunnicliffe sailed really well today.

“In the single-handed classes we’ve had some outstanding – Nick Thompson picked up a huge lead in the Laser fleet with Ed Wright also dominant in the Finn, so in terms of our performance overall in those classes we’re in pretty good shape.

Park concluded: “Alison Young has shown great promise in the Radial – she’s made a big jump this week to win her first ever World Cup medal so I’m really pleased for her and hopefully it’s a sign of more things to come.”

Skandia Team GBR medal tally:

Gold

Nick Thompson (Laser)
Ed Wright (Finn)

Silver

Giles Scott (Finn)
Lucy Macgregor, Annie Lush, Ally Martin (women’s match racing)
John Robertson, Hannah Stodel, Steve Thomas (Sonar)

Bronze

Alison Young (Laser Radial)

ENDS

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