

2006 overview

In 2006 the 5.5 Class activities globally slowed down a little. Countries like Germany, Italy or Austria had next to no activity this year and major events had to be canceled. France is still managing to keep a minimal participation. Switzerland and the Netherlands also experienced an activity slowdown. In the Nordic countries, Finland is also facing a decline in the regatta attendance.

On the other hand, major events like the World Championship saw a very large field of boats and the season ended successfully in Europe with the Gstaad Yacht Club trophy.

In the Bay area of San Francisco, the nine 5.5 Columbia were able to race a championship with excellent wind conditions.

One of the most exciting events was maybe the Swiss championship as 11 valid races were sailed over 4 days, a record for the Swiss Class!

Gold Cup, Dutch & World Championship in Medemblik

The Dutch put up a big event, setting high expectations in respect of participation and number of countries present on their favorite spot for sail racing: Medemblik the national regatta center.

But Medemblik is not like some other famous spots...and the varying weather conditions played games with fleet.

The Gold Cup saw an interesting participation of eleven countries and the final opposed Norway to the Netherlands represented by Hans Nadorp. Some

course re-orientation during the last leg screwed the last race to give Netherlands their first Gold Cup title.



Hans Nadorp, Frans van Schellen Eric Wesselman winning the Scandinavian Gold Cup for Netherlands (Credit: Linda)

In the Classic Cup despite a DNF on the first race, the Italians just let no chance to the rest of the fleet by taking all firsts in the next four races. Alfredo Delli, Luca Marolli (helmsman) and Claudio Mazzanti won this prize for the second consecutive time.

Thirty boats started in the Dutch championship and the Swiss led the fleet on all four races. Flavio Marazzi with his father's new boat Ali Baba took one, three and four, whilst Schumann (I know he is not Swiss...but sailed for Pieper a Swiss guy) won the second race. The latest Schmidt designs were finally showing their real potential...



SUI-219 Ali Baba is one of the latest 5.5 from Wilke designed by Schmidt. Major change is in keel proil.

Things started of quite well for the World championship. The first races were sailed with a moderate wind and fairly nice weather. Things got tougher during the fifth race with strong wind gust caused by storms rushing through Europe. Schümann was in the lead during the first two races but things suddenly turned round as the wind rose and his lead melted like snow in the sun as Marazzi showed superior speed and tactics.



Schümann leading Flavio Marazzi but not for long...(Credit: Linda)

Menzi took an OCS in the third race and had to pull out on the fifth race deleting all his chances to reach the podium.

Nadorp kept a third place right in front of Gullichsen who was handicaped by a bad start in the first race. In the Evolution fleet, I sailed Whisper, a fine light wind boat but I couldn't stop Michael Fischer in AUT-19 from coming back as the wind blew harder...and then my main came down...



Hans-Jürgen Queisser's GER-42 experiencing a broach during the World's (Credit: Linda)

Everybody had hoped to race a six and a seven race to erase some bad scoring but for some reason still unknown today, the racing committee kept the fleet in the harbor and the championship ended there with several very frustrated sailors...

Gstaad Yacht club trophy

The invitation to this event is something not to be missed. It is one of the very few events which is sponsored and the team racing makes it also very attractive. 18 boats attended this year's edition enjoying a nice autumn sun in Thun. Three races were sailed on Saturday and Menzi kicked team mate Nadorp of by winning two of them. With Erzberger on seventh place this team easily won the Gstaad Yacht Club trophy. The skiing

competition will take place in Gstaad on the 4th of next March.

Looking at 2007

The new sailing season will resume with the Alpen Cup in Torbole. The Swiss Championship will be sailed on the swiss part of lake Maggiore from the 7th till the 10th of June in Ascona. We hope this date suits everybody from North to South of Europe !

As voted during the last AGM in Medemblik, San Remo will host the World's, the Scandinavian Gold Cup and the 'de Kaag' Classic Cup in September (check the Regatta Calendar on the www.5.5class.org).

Two new boats at Kolly's

Philippe Kolly a long time owner of 5.5s and boat builder in Tannay on lake Geneva has just completed his own 5.5. It's a Seb Schmidt design (who else...!) slightly enhanced from the latest Wilke's boat as the water lines have been stretched further again. Unfortunately the winter arrived faster than the completion and Philippe will have to wait next spring to try her.



Latest 5.5 built in Switzerland with sail number SUI-222. Her name will be the one of a planet in 4 letter, but it's not Mars says Philippe Kolly...(Credit: Ambroise)

Meanwhile Philippe is building the next 5.5 ordered by Christian Hauvette, the French president of the 5.5 Class. Like LaFayette (FRA-45) also built by Kolly, she will have the natural wood look. She may well be the only new 5.5 built in the year 2007 as Wilke has no orders for this winter.



New 5.5 for Hauvette built at Kolly (Credit: Ambroise)

About the new sail plan (by Daniel Stampfli from Europ'Sail)

The latest changes in the Class Rule went into effect in March 2006. These changes were an increase of:

A/ + 1% in the mainsail's upper girth (MGU),

B/ + 2% of the mid girth (MGM),

C/ the head width of the jibs from 50 to 90 mm and a change in the batten limitation in the jibs (3 battens are now allowed with a max length of 700 mm.).

It is interesting to note that this latest point allows the sailmaker to make the top batten "full length" if he thinks necessary.

The increase (slight) of the sail area combined to the general tendency for the most recent boats to have less form

stability, implied a modification of the shape of the mainsails and jibs.

By end of 2005, the first set of sails based on the new rule were produced. At the time we already had a pretty good idea of what they should look like. Only minor modifications were made to the sails delivered during 2006. After more trials with the 2006 mainsail (codename M1), a new sail with codename M2 was developed. This sail was actually used by Flavio MARAZZI for the World's in Medemblick. She's designed for more breeze compared to the M1, thus has a more open leech and a draft that has been moved forward a little. As a result, M2 is a very good performer from 10 to 20 knots of true wind whereas the M1's optimal range is from 5 to 15 knots.



As far as their strength is concerned, both can be sailed easily to the max. wind strength of 25 knots. allowed by the Class Rule. More durable (stronger) mainsail for sailing in area where the average wind strength lies above 18-20

knots can be built. The luff curve of each of these sails can be tailored to match the various type of mast bend (straight mast or mast with pre-bend).

Jibs

As for the headsail the increased width of the head made the twist in general an even more important factor of speed. The second change was the length of the battens. The sails delivered in 2006, came with a "short" (not full length) batten for both the light / medium jib (usage 4 to 14 kts) and the medium / heavy (10 – 22 kts) jibs. The heavy jib received a top full length batten. For 2007, the medium / heavy jib will be fitted with a double top batten pocket which will allow either the use of a full length (to be installed while sailing at jib's upper range) or of a short batten. Concerning their shapes, the same thinking as for the mainsail was applied to the medium / heavy jib, the leech was opened whilst the draft was moved forward. On the light / medium a change in the vertical distribution of the depth will be carried out in 2007.

Wish you all a very nice year end and looking forward to seeing you all again in 2007 !

Yours sincerely ,
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