

US Olympic Trials West



2006 US Sailing Pre-Trials

Pre-Trials a preview of 2007? McNay/Biehl, Clark/Mergenthaler, Barger and Rios will see

Oct. 29, 2006

LONG BEACH, Calif.---Stuart McNay and crew Graham Biehl in the men's 470, Amanda Clark and crew Sarah Mergenthaler in the women's 470 and Ben Barger and Nancy Rios in the men's and women's RS:X windsurfer, respectively, were winners in Southern California's final set of US Sailing Olympic Pre-Trials concluding Sunday.

Barger and Rios also qualified for U.S. berths in the Pan-Am Games next year.

This wasn't just a dress rehearsal for the big show a year from now when they'll compete for the sole slots in their classes to represent the U.S. in the 2008 Olympic sailing at Qingdao, China. It was worth more than that.

"A whole lot more," said Clark, referring to the campaign funding available to members of the US Sailing Team.

"It's an important step for us being ranked number one," McNay said.

The Southern California Pre-Trials in 8 of the 11 Olympic classes this month were the first of three ranking events for the US Sailing Team of 2007, which is now only three deep in each class instead of five as in past years so that available funds for travel, shipping and equipment may be concentrated on the cream of the crop prospects.

Also, being number one is even better because that means medical insurance, plus possibly additional grants from the Olympic Sailing Committee based on performance.

Clark and Mergenthaler were ranked No. 1 the past two years but were the second women's team behind Erin Maxwell and crew Elizabeth Kratzig starting the fourth and final day Sunday.

"We were under pressure to get our [number one] slot back," Clark said.

Worse, a starting violation on the first day put them in a hole they dug their way out of through six consecutive races with no finish worse than fifth climaxed by first place in the second of three races Sunday. They finished three points up on Maxwell/Kinsolving as four women's teams placed second

Stuart McNay (r.) and crew Graham Biehl sealed their runaway victory with a win in the last race

Ben Barger led the way in the RS:X, followed by Seth Besse (l.)

Amanda Blake and crew Sarah Mergenthaler won their second race Sunday and finished second overall

Nancy Rios won 6 of 8 races in the women's RS:X competition

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470 Men & Women

US Sailing Center, L.B.
Oct. 26-29

RS:X Men & Women

Alamitos Bay YC
Oct. 26-29



Pre-Trials Results

Tornado

San Diego YC
Oct. 13-15

49er

Southwestern YC
Oct. 20-22
(Includes photo gallery)

Finn

Newport Harbor YC
Oct. 20-22

Star

through fifth in the combined scoring with the men---and how about that?

"These were conditions that women can do very well in," Blake said, referring to the generally single-digit winds that picked up only slightly to 8 or 9 knots Sunday. "That's what is good about the 470. We can be very competitive with men."

But they feared they had blown it all in the last race when, Mergenthaler said, "we sailed for the wrong windward mark."

Before realizing their error, they sailed toward a mark being used by a fleet of 70-footers racing farther offshore. Their mark had been moved because of a wind shift.

"We were just trying to cover our competition," Clark said, "and fortunately our competition sailed there, too."

McNay and Biehl have a temporary leg up on their strongest rivals, Mikee Anderson and crew David Hughes, who missed the first day because Anderson had an economics exam at USC. The latter won two of their seven races, but McNay and Biehl finished ahead of them in four. Anderson and Hughes wound up as the third men's team behind Justin Law and Michael Miller and seventh overall.

"It made for some competitive racing," McNay said, but the best part was winning the last race.

Biehl said, "We were talking about that on the final leg—how it's always nice to finish a regatta with a first."

Barger won all nine of the men's RS:X races, while Rios posted her fifth and sixth wins in eight women's races. Although the time limit had not passed for starting another race, the 10th race was cancelled because the wind was lighter than the minimum required to protect the board sailors from overextending themselves with the physical exertion required to pump their sails.

The 470s sailed out of the US Sailing Center while the RS:Xs were based at Alamos Bay Yacht Club down the street.

Previous Pre-Trials hosted this month: Tornado, San Diego YC; 49er, Southwestern YC, San Diego; Finn, Newport Harbor YC, Newport Beach; Star, California YC, Marina del Rey. Complete results are available at www.sdyc.org/trials/ or directly through the links in the right-hand column.

A year from now the same venues will host the formal Olympic Trials to select the one boat in each class that will represent the United States in the Olympics at Qingdao, China in 2008.

Final leaders

470 (men and women combined; 12 boats, 10 races; 1

California YC
Oct. 20-22



Entry and other information

US Sailing National Teams

ISAF Rankings

2004 Olympic Results

throwout):

1. Stuart McNay, Chestnut Hill, Mass./Graham Biehl, San Diego, 2-1-1-1-2-1-3-(5)-3-1, 15 points.

2. Amanda Clark, Shelter Island, N.Y./Sarah Mergenthaler, Harvey Cedars, N.J., 4-(13/OCS)-6-3-1-2-5-4-1-8, 34.

3. Erin Maxwell, Norwalk, Conn./Isabelle Kinsolving, New York, 3-3-4-2-5-4-2-7-7-(9), 37, 18.

Complete results: <http://www.ussclb.org/>

MEN'S RS:X (5 boats, after 9 races; 1 throwout):

1. Ben Barger, Tampa, Fla., (1)-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1, 8.

2. Seth Besse, Guilford, Conn., (4)-3-2-2-2-2-2-3, 18.

3. Mark Powell, Miami, 2-2-3-(4)-3-3-3-3.5-2, 21.5.

WOMEN'S RS:X (5 boats, after 8 races, 1 throwout):

1. Nancy Rios, Cocoa, Fla., 2-1-1-1-1-(3)-1-1, 8.

2. Farrah Hall, Annapolis, 1-2-2-2-1-2-(5/OCS), 12.

3. Karen Marriott, Lakewood, Colo., 3-3-3-(4)-4-2-3-2, 20.

Complete results, photos and more information: www.abyc.org
and www.sdyc.org/trials

Entry and other information is available at
www.ussailing.org/olympics/pretrials/default.aspx

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