



IOMEC 2016 Vitoria: an epilogue

The racing is finished, and the final result written. It is time for a short summary, and the organizer's work will now turn into a debriefing and evaluation mode, before totally closing the activities.

In the sport side:

A Championship is mainly a sporting event, and this takes priority over other aspects, at least that is our view.

17 races were run in 6 days, and most aspects worked perfectly: we had wind every day, we lost at most two hours of racing due to low wind, and that is much better than average in June.



We had two days of sun, and the others of cloudy skies, that is less than expected, but I can see in the pictures that the mix was more than enough to get a sun tan, and hopefully, it never got too hot or too cold in the week, which is also better than can be expected, at least if you are looking for the optimum weather for sailing. The day after the championship we had quite heavy rain shower, and that is also something that we were lucky about, as rain is never to be discarded in the Basque Country. A lot has been said and written about weed in the course. That was really the problem in this championship. For the record we will repeat that we race an IOM league here every month, and a national event once or twice a year, since many years, and we have never experienced any significant amount of weed. Lessons will need to be learned for the future.

Did it affect the result? everyone has the right to its own opinion, I do not think it changed the outcome, or at least I would like to think that is the case. At the end of the day the scoring reflects something very close to the hierarchy established in the past four or five years.

On the positive side, the championship was always interesting. When I saw how Brad dominated his first heat, I feared that it may be a boring triumphant march, but I was totally wrong: we had 13 different race winners, and after race 15, 6 skippers were less than 7 points apart at the top. After race 16 it seemed that Brad was too far behind, and we had a clear leader with potentially two challengers from France. I followed the top three in the last race, and didn't quite notice that

Brad was getting to lead the championship until he crossed the line, recovering the 12 points by which he was lagging behind.

In the end one point difference between 1st and 2nd, and a number of skippers separated by a handful of points does reflect how hard everyone fought and how close the championship was.

It always seems that the winner takes all, and nobody can question Brad's references, but the championship was open, and at least 7 skippers could have won, had things been slightly different. As Zvonko told me on the second day of racing, this is a marathon kind of race.



A few names I would like to recall that deserve recognition: Juan Marcos Egea and Graham Bantock took the risk of bringing new designs, and struggled the first days, but did come in the top fleet regularly the last two days, and show that they belong in the elite of the sport, and that next year they will give all the others a hard time.

Also Tony Edwards, our Great Grand Master trophy, which raced very regularly and was maybe not an sprinter, but was in the top ten all along the championship, and keeping an smile at all times.



Other aspects:

There are many other things that happened and did not attract a lot of attention, and that is just right in an event wich is all about racing.

We heard a lot of compliments about the Club Nautico Vitoria facilities. Toilets, swimming pool, restaurant, bar, parking, closed site for ships,....

The changes in the race course may have been manged better, with a different lay out. There was an initial plan for the courses, and the team in charge of the regatta discussed and tried its best to decide what would be the best lay out of buoys. After seeing how the wind changed direction during the championship, another option may look better, and we may do it differently next time.

The jury and the measurement worked without interruption, and assured a fair event, as the circumstances that affected the racing were there for everybody. Our web and facebook activity may have also seemed less than ideal but have kept all followers informed and the Facebook page during the week has reached 125,000 hits.



Overall, skippers from 19 countries raced during 6 days without interruption, friendships were revived or created, and competitors were at the same time comrades.

The Closing Ceremony left everybody looking forward for the next opportunity to compete. Next year, the Worlds are in Pierrelatte.

See you all there in 2017.

Ramón Goñi.

