

My Brazilian IOM Worlds

By Michel Roure, USA 19

The Worlds – Going to Brazil!

When Fred Rocha told us, that Brazil is awarded IOM Worlds, so get ready – I was all in immediately. No matter what, I was going to find my way there. I wanted to visit Brazil, and looked forward to hanging with so many sailors with the same passion. And to sail our favorite boats in competition with the best, while representing the USA – magnificent. I had some work to do to qualify...

Two years later, after a lot of practices and travels to regattas; I was in... I had made the USA team, saved some money, and was motivated for this adventure. Time to focus and make final preparations. The R2 championship in NJ came at a good time for most of the team to get together just before the Worlds, discuss our options, and for Fred to commence showing us the kind of emotional and passionate journey we were about to experience in Brazil.



Fred Rocha

WELCOME to the Worlds

Flying to Brazil from the US was not too bad from my East coast home at about 9 hours to Sao Paulo, but the West coast guys endured a 12 hours trip depending on their itinerary. When entering a new country, don't forget to collect your baggage (boat case, etc.) and to re-checking it for the next flight. We all had needed a connecting flight to Porto Alegre in the southernmost state of Brazil, Rio Grande do Sul, the land of the Gauchos culture. Jerry Brower, who knows better, missed much of our training days, while waiting to recover his boat that he inadvertently abandoned on landing in Brazil!

I was amazed how our boat baggage came in such a wide variety of coffin-like cases – a very creative class.

Fortunately, Fred Rocha arranged an efficient routine to pick us up at the airport, commute us daily, and then return us to the airport for our return. It was handled with an eternal smile by his Brother Fellipe Rocha and Elisabeth. My special thank you to the Rocha's, who lost their father the week before, and yet managed every detail of this huge chore. I hope keeping busy helped them in their grief.

Baggage came in all sort of shapes.

Elisabeth and Fellipe Rocha ("Princely" yours)



The WORLD on a small island!

The venue is a man-made island, site of the CLUBE DOS JANGADEIROS with complete facilities, including their sailing school, club, and a full family complex with bar, restaurant, swimming pool and storage & administration facilities where all of us were leaving our boat every night. And where all weighing and measurement control took place.

Tents were erected among the wide green grounds from where we could access the water from three sides, and where the flag poles with all present nation flags were planted, an IOM Worlds tradition.

Here we were, for sure, all set to start experiencing that emotion Fred had promised all of us. And after all introductions of the countries reps under each flag, the teams, the judges, coming from all over the world, the organizers, the club officials and volunteers, the state of Rio Grande do Sul and other reps ...etc ...came this catchy and so moving Brazilian anthem "The placid shores of Ipiranga". That was it!

We were immersed in the Brazilian soul of this very special country. Left for us is to perform at our best! But first nothing can be accomplished on an empty stomach.

So, after the unavoidable daily “Caipirinha” individually mixed by the club barman, came the first “churrasco”, that barbecue that will feed us almost every night, which is typical for Brazil but even more prevalent in this “Gaúcho” State.

And the “Muito Obrigado” (thank you very much)... Boa noite (good night), Bom dia (good morning) and other Portuguese expressions became a part of our daily language. Although Brazilians were also keen to communicate in English or Spanish with the competitors.

Gary Boell and Ross Bennett on their way to the venue: a man-made island, site of the Club of



the “Jaganda riders”, these “sail rafts” are still used in some parts of the Brazilian north coast.



The WORLD on the water!

76 competitors from 21 different countries: 13 Brazilians, 9 Americans, 8 Australians, 6 English, 6 French, 6 Chileans, 5 Croats, 4 Argentinians. Norway, China, Spain, Italy, Japan,



Thailand had two skippers each, and Zealand, Germany, Bahamas, Singapore, Malaysia, Turkey and Canada each one.



The Tacari river flowing South towards the venue

Talking about our favorite toys: 70/76 boats came for the four usual suppliers: 38 Britpop's (plus 1 Widget); 13 Kantun's (12 were K2); 10 Vickers (2 V11); 8 Ceccarelli's (2 Venti, 6 Sedici). And the 6 remaining ones were Fraktal, Nitro, Panda's (3) and the DeBow5 of our own NY skipper Jon Elmaleh.

The course was perfectly set parallel to the shore, alongside the Tacari huge river, which is more like a half mile wide estuary at this point. It had rained heavily the week before and the waters were brown, carrying earth from the nearby mountain range.

However, as fair weather and heat started setting on Porto Alegre, we were blessed with very pleasant days featuring a very regular wind cycle calling for A rigs in the morning and calling for B rig change every afternoon around 2:30pm, which provided a couple hours of superb sailing with a gradual shift off shore forcing the PRO to end the days around 5pm. That crucial timing for a rig change saw some very tricky survival races for those still carrying their A rig in the forming waves. River current was not a factor.

As the days passed, the heat increased and finally delivered a stormy end of week with high humidity and strong winds. Chops turned into waves. We spent the last two days under C rigs testing the limits of our equipment, our fitness and our skills to not only skip for the best but balancing on the pontoons while launching our boats.

The WORLD around the water!

The 76 competitors were split into 5 fleets (with 6 up and 6 down), which meant 21 skippers, and a dozen judges and observers had to stroll along some uneven ground.

We even had a couple of scary falls, but also had to avoid a couple of brooding birds who had decided, no matter what, to keep nesting and watching their eggs in the path of the skippers at the expense of piercing cries.



Our own consistent Jerry Broweravoiding our nesting friend isolated between chairs.

Talking about demonstrations and conduct, the group behavior of our competitors was interesting. One thing seems to characterize all of us despite cultural diversities: skippers quickly develop a routine and return day after day to the exact same spot. Whether inside the tents or under the same tree, with the same group, and seemingly to be totally absorbed by the fine tuning of his or her preferred toy!

Only after these protocols and some sailing to perfect the fine tuning, do we start sampling a specific taste of the various cultures.

The Brazilians and their large delegation were omnipresent, volunteering right and left and cheering their champions (14,17,21, 29) Alberto Assis, the Mueller's - Father and son, while Denis Astbury, was a bit sad imagining the huge meaning this event would have had for his Dad. He told us that his son was a fourth generation RC sailor (although absent). Denis was totally absorbed helping people constantly right and left with his crafty skills.

The French and Croats had occupied early on the left-hand side tree covered grounds, with 3 of each group in the top 10 in the end!

Croats Zvonko Jelacic and Ante Kovacevic (1-2) could not put one foot wrong the whole time and Mirko Ukas was 7th!

Romain Dubreuil and his new Venti, came impressively to life gradually, and he topped Olivier Cohen and Xavier Liger at the end; finishing 4-8-10 for France.

Single handedly, Ian Vickers and his almost invisible approach was quietly staying there with a metronomic regularity and earned the third spot of the podium. What a performance for this mild-mannered designer-builder, who is such an impressive skipper!

The English are quietly focused and self-centered. Peter Stollery (5) and Chris Harris(9) showed their strength on the water along with Graham Bantock(13) who ended up harnessing the tuning of his ...BritPop! He rejoined his usual pro rank, while his wife Lorna was impeccably scoring every race.

As for the Aussies, with their always expressive "Aussy-Aussy-Aussy" post regatta demonstrations, did not hamper any of their efficiency on the water. Paul Jones (6), Sean Wallis (12) and Rosco Bennett(19) were on their game to nobody's surprise.

Our own US Team setup was more spread out, although the majority camped in the right-hand side (English speaking) tent, with Gary Boell apparently also speaking in German and/or Norwegian, we'll never know!

Steve Landeau had picked his own tree and was quietly enjoying the company of Mariana, her Brazilian soon to be spouse and was fine tuning his newly acquired Robot BritPop, Robot BritPop, with every day improving performance to an impressive 11th place finish.



Steve and Mariana

Our US team from left to right: Jonny Goldsberry, Stephan Cohen, Mark Golison, Steve Landeau, Michel Roure, Chris Sullivan, Jon Elmaleh, Jerry Brower, Gary Boell.



Many times, I've noticed this past season that our USA group has become increasingly competitive and it showed at Worlds. Lots of progress yet to make, but the depth of our group is clearly coming to life with the participation of well-weathered skippers like Jonny Goldsburry, Jon Elmaleh, or Chris Sullivan. this bodes well for the future.

Those who were in France two years ago, all made significant gains here: Mark Golison from 33 to 15, Gary Boell from 47 to 20, Jerry Brower from 54 to 27, Michel from 73 to 35, Stephan Cohen from 61 to 42....Stan Wallace (the 10th "American or 9th Ausy" representing the Bahamas from 40 to 32.

For some reasons I also took an irreversible habit of camping in the same spot, in the left tent amongst the Latin group of the two super nice Italians Paolo and Paolo (funny how they also look alike) and the Spanish speaking "armada" from Chili, Spain and Argentina. Every morning's greetings were inevitably Chi Chi Chi to which you respond LeLeLe! This group was all about discussing the scary results of Argentinian elections, the better value of Chilean Pisco versus Caipirinha, the Carmenere grape variety of red Chilean wine vs the Spanish Syrah. They even organized an interesting tuning training for all of them to improve and took advantage of the experience of Spain's Pepe Valverde while keeping in check his Latin temper on bad days!

Among all this colorful tableau, it was my pleasure to chat quietly with Kaya and his spouse from Istanbul, or Minao Hirao from Japan who put together a couple of great days, or to try and improve my learning Portuguese, which turned to be a chore in itself! Also, to mention the stellar performance of Canadian Peter Grimm at his first Worlds, and the growing Asian fleet from Thailand, Singapore or Malaysia. This included two Chinese father and his daughter being a bit over coached by mom and dad!

Thais and SGPR and MAS all seemed to enjoy the event

RD Mark Foster...(picture below) from Texas, was quietly coordinating Chip Till, our RD at the



nationals, Pierre Gonnet who had organized the last worlds in France 2017 and Pierre Marchand on the buoy boat, although we don't really know if he needed any directions! He is so gifted with setting a course, while the judges and umpires were perform their well-synchronized routine.

In the middle Fred Rocha and his staff were reining in and directing every aspect of the organization, and of our nights.

Amongst these special moments: that giant churrasco of Lamb, pork and beef cooked over this “fogo de campo” (ground fire) for six hours.

The lay day organized to tour the back country in Canela and Gramado, on Wednesday, the night when Lorna Bantock (a church minister) blessed the wedding of Steve Landeau and Mariana Kido as well as that of Brazil's Claudio Vaz(he was at our 17 nationals) and Mirela Martinelli.



During the day a drone was filming all the races while our own Ray Seta (with wife Sylvia in photo above) from AMYA was conducting interviews and collecting videos for our web sites.

Jennifer Golison (here below and always at the center of our team) was also tirelessly collecting precious videos and pictures for posterity ... and us.

The huge Churrasco BBQ



Jennifer and Mark Golison (center) with Gary Boell, Ian Vickers and company, on their way to another churrasco.

The WORLDS come to an end!

Then came the final day.... and Fred Rocha came alive like never and delivered the most attractive, the most passionate, the most colorful and the longest award ceremony ever. Traditional dances from Guardoes Folkloricos, one more caipirinha, many gifts, and lots of



hugs.

And winners had to sacrifice to the traditional dive in the water...



The final podium: Zvonko Jelacic from Split Croatia with Fred Rocha and Clube's President in front of second place Ante Kovacevic left also from Croatia and Ian Vickers third right from NZ

.....time to pack everything again and to load all cases onto trailers across the island access bridge and to bid farewell to each other, a truly elaborated affair after these days together.

Golison's 55 Sedici and Roure's 19 Britpop under C rigs



Fred was certainly right and made sure everyone of us got a clear appreciation of his BRAZIL.

The IOM class REALLY SHINES ON SUCH OCCASIONS!And it make you proud.

Thank you Fred... Muito Obrigado.

Michel Roure USA19

