

## Cadet News

### Hobie Dragoon World Championships

At the end of July, Steph (Wall) and I travelled over to Duinbergen, Belgium to compete in the first ever Dragoon World Champs. We were both so hyped up over the excitement of it all, but that feeling couldn't come without nerves alongside it. When we arrived at the Royal Belgian Sailing Club we were amazed at the site. It was a beach club with over 200 cats lined up on the sandy beach. Then we saw, or perhaps we should say we couldn't see the wind! Me and Steph are now the heavy ones in the boat and this is a great advantage in 15+ knots, but unfortunately it also means that in the light wind stuff we have to work extra hard to keep up with the feathers aboard some of the other boats in the fleet.

Before the event started we had a couple of days just to wind down and get in some training with the rest of the GB squad. On both of the training days a sea breeze kicked in towards the end of the afternoon and we were secretly hoping for this in the event as well.

No such luck!!! The first day of the event started with the 4knots of tide against the 5knots of wind meaning that the racing was postponed for a couple of nerve-racking hours spent waiting on the boats willing the sea breeze to fill in. It didn't and we ended up sailing in the most challenging conditions we have ever come across. These same conditions then followed for the next 3 days of racing.

The first race of each day was by far the hardest and getting into 'race mode' was a definite challenge for me and Steph.

By the last day we had finally mastered psyching ourselves up onshore beforehand, a skill I wish I could have gone to the competition already knowing. The last day was the decider for the places as we were joint 3rd with 2 races left to sail. We were so determined that the 2nd belonged to us that we got right up the front of the fleet and finished with a 2nd place in the first race of that day. That was it - we had to come in the top 2 places in the last race!

It seemed easy enough to me and Steph as we sailed through the gate 1st on the first lap with a comfy lead against the 2nd Belgium boat. We were sailing on top form and had already headed upwind before the next boat rounded the mark. The Hobie 16's which were the other fleet in the event, then got their race abandoned and knowing our flags me and Steph boldly sailed on.



(c)Paul Wyeth Marine Photography

Wiring upwind in pre-event prep

Then Disaster!!!

The rest of our fleet were finishing. The race committee was hooting them. We needed to turn round, hoist our genniker and sail downwind to try and get to the line before the second boat. What was going on?! We finished in 9th place. It felt like our goal had just been wrenched away from us. After speaking with our very reassuring coach we were told that we were right (are we ever wrong!?!?!). And that we now had to go and ask for redress. So the stress hadn't ended: if we won the protest we would be 2nd, if we lost it we would be 3rd. Seems simple enough but to speak to the international jury protesting the race committee was definitely one of the hardest things I have ever had to do. Steph was not allowed to come into the jury room with me and she just had to wait apprehensively outside not knowing what was going on. I explained the whole race and after a lot of questions, checking of results at various places on the course, and setting out miniature examples, I finally got my result. We got the whole race disqualified and then immediate redress for everyone. We came 1st in that all important race.

The Prizegiving was great with everyone getting loads of goodies and prizes and our titles- 2nd Hobie Dragoon World Champions and 2nd Hobie Dragoon Youth World Champions.

We then stayed on in Belgium to compete in the Belgium Nationals in which we also got a 2nd place.

**Hannah Rowles**