



**MAGIC MARINE**  
**OPTIMIST EUROPEAN  
CHAMPIONSHIP**  
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**PRESS RELEASE**  
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**SPAIN'S MINANA WINS EUROPEAN OPTIMIST CROWN WITH RACE TO SPARE**



Spain's Julia Minana has been crowned the 2015 Girls' Optimist European Champion, wrapping up the title with a race to spare at the Magic Marine Optimist European Championships at Plas Heli, Pwllheli today (Wednesday 22 July).

Minana's performance over the week has been so consistent that even if she did not take her place on the 49-boat girls Gold fleet start line on the final day of racing tomorrow, she could not be beaten to the top trophy.

The 15-year-old from Javea, on Spain's east coast, scored two fourth places and a 19th today, to put her in a seemingly unassailable position heading into the last race. But her early victory was confirmed following the outcome of a protest hearing.

Minana won the first race of the event on Sunday, and before today was discarding a highest score of a fourth. Overnight leader Palma Cargo (CRO), who had reveled in the challenging breezes of the qualifying series, did not manage to transfer her form in the lighter, shiftier airs the fleet experienced in today's final series, as Minana's consistency paid dividends.

Meanwhile, on a day when many of the leading sailors posted series defining high scores, Greece's Ariadni Spanaki turned in arguably the performance of race day four with scores of 1, 3, 2 elevating her to second in the overall and European rankings. Ellyn Tan (SIN) sits third overall while Cargo occupies the third European placing.

Spanaki said: *"I had a very good day and I managed to climb almost to the top of the Championship. I'm extremely happy because it's my first time at the Europeans, and even though last year I was in the World Championship I didn't do as good as this year. Tomorrow I hope I will do a pretty nice race and hold my position."*

The USA's Thomas Rice is in a commanding position at the top of the overall boys Gold fleet, with scores

of 9, 1 and 22 giving him a 17 point advantage over second placed Wonn Kye Lee (SIN) with just one race of the regatta remaining.

Rice said: *“Consistency has been the strength of my regatta so far, not taking too many risks, just doing what I know and not doing any big drastic move to try to gain a lot. Risk versus reward, I’ve learned that as I’ve got older and this is my last event so I’ve got all the experience I’m ever going to get in this boat.”*

However, the race for the European Championship title is set to go to the wire, with Matej Planinsic (SLO) currently in pole position and third overall, but with the door still ajar for a number of sailors, including Greece’s Aimilianos Monos and Britain’s Rhys Lewis seeking to finish the event on a high while hoping Planinsic slips up.

There was also thrilling racing in the Silver and Bronze fleets today, with Ryunosuke Sugawara (JPN) winning two races in the Boys Silver fleet, which is headed by Guilherme Trainini Hony Plentz (BRA). Silver Girls fleet is being won Britain’s Hannah Roberts-Straw with Boys Bronze, who had just the two races today, being led by Denmark’s Jens-Christian Dehn- Toftehøj, thanks to a first and third.

One more day of racing is scheduled for the 2015 Magic Marine Optimist European Championships, with the final races – races 10 for Gold and Silver fleets and races 9 and 10 for Bronze Boys - scheduled for tomorrow (Thursday 23 July).

The first warning signal for the boys Bronze fleet is scheduled for 1200 hours followed by girls Gold, boys Gold, girls Silver, boys Silver and boys Bronze. There are 159 boys and 97 girls from 37 nations entered in the Championships,

This is the first time in the Championship’s official 32-year history that the Optimist Europeans are being held in Britain, and only the second time the event has been hosted on UK waters since Belfast in 1993. The 2015 Europeans are also the first event hosted at the new Plas Heli Welsh Sailing Academy.

The Optimist junior sailing class is widely regarded as the breeding ground for future international sailing success with four-time Olympic champion and America’s Cup winner, Sir Ben Ainslie, a former Optimist sailor. Over 90% of sailors at London 2012 raced Optimists as juniors, including TeamGB medalists Hannah Mills, Saskia Clark, Iain Percy, Andrew Simpson and Luke Patience.

You can stay up to date with all the action through the event website, including links to the live tracking, following us on Twitter @optimisteuros15, liking our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/optimisteuros2015](http://www.facebook.com/optimisteuros2015) <<http://www.facebook.com/optimisteuros2015>> and our Instagram at @optimist\_euros15. You can also see videos on our You Tube channel at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) <<http://www.youtube.com>> and searching 2015 Magic Marine Optimist Europeans.

For more information on the 2015 Magic Marine Optimist European Championships visit [www.optimisteuros2015.com](http://www.optimisteuros2015.com) <<http://www.optimisteuros2015.com>>

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1) New Girls European Champion Julia Minana (ESP) - <https://www.dropbox.com/s/uxd6xd7yyxecm8n/juliaminana.jpg?dl=0>

2) Thomas Rice (USA) heads the overall Boys Gold fleet - <https://www.dropbox.com/s/8dmlpkjky0xd622/thomasrice.jpg?dl=0>

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