



MAGIC MARINE
**OPTIMIST EUROPEAN
CHAMPIONSHIP**
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PRESS RELEASE

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WAVES RULE DAY AT OPTIMIST EUROPEANS



Croatia's Palma Cargo and Great Britain's Rory Harper lead the way as mastering the waves was the order of the day on race day three of the 2015 Magic Marine Optimist European Championships at Plas Heli, Pwllheli today (Tuesday 21 July).

Three races in waves of 2-3m - 15 races in total across the five boys and girls flights - were completed, with Cargo adding two firsts and a second to her opening day race win double while Harper, a member of the Great Britain Development Team, consolidated his run of top six finishes with his first race win of the regatta in the third and final race of the day.

Six races have now completed in the series, making up for losing race day two to poor weather yesterday, and both Cargo and Harper moved to the top of their respective rankings after the discard was applied after race five. Cargo discarded a race one Black Flag Disqualification (BFD) and Harper a race two 40th. Today marked the end of the qualifying series, with tomorrow the start of the final series and the fleets split into Gold, Silver plus Bronze for boys.

Having picked up a BFD Disqualification in race one, Cargo admits safely negotiating her way into Gold fleet was her main priority. She said: *"It is very windy and I like these conditions because I am tall. I started behind everyone else because I was worried not to get disqualified again."*

Harper also believes his size played a part in his day three success. He said: *"In the first race I got a really bad start but the I hiked really hard and I was doing ok at the windward mark and that confused me! So then I just hiked the rest of the day and it went really well. I've been feeling really good in the windy stuff, it just a shame tomorrow's not going to be as windy!"*

"The consistency of my results has pleased me most about my sailing. Apart from one race I've had all my results in the top six, which has been great for me."

The best male performance of the day came from Japan's Naoki Kurahashi, whose two firsts and a

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second moved him into fifth spot. It is extremely tight with just three points separating the top four sailors. The Netherlands' Thomas Westerhof lies second, while Thomas Rice (USA) and Singapore's Won Kye Lee are tied on 19 points in third and fourth.

Meanwhile, day one girls leader, Spain's Julia Minana is keeping the pressure on Cargo with a 2, 4, 1 today. With just the one discardable race score in the scheduled 10-race series, Cargo has no room for error in the rest of the event. Cargo's Croatian teammate Karmen Perkovic sits in third overall but tied on the same points - 28 - with Singapore's Ellyn Tan.

Minana said: *"Today was a good day. The conditions is strange for me because the wind is very strong and the waves are very high and short. I like this wind."*

For many of the international sailors this is their first visit to Pwllheli and the new Plas Heli Welsh National Sailing Academy, while for others it is their first experience of such a major Championship event.

Harper admits he is enjoying racing on British waters, adding: *"I think the new centre is great; it's proving a great place to sail. I like having the home advantage, I've sailed here a lot before and that has been helpful."*

Meanwhile, for Canada's Hunter Dejean the whole experience is proving a massive positive learning curve. She said: *"The sailing is so good here, everyone is so good, it's insane. They're so solid at everything, no-one makes mistakes, their boat speed is so fast, their tactics are just insane, it's a whole other level. I've already learned so much and I'm really excited to get back to Canada."*

Two more days of racing are scheduled for the 2015 Magic Marine Optimist European Championships, with three races - races 7, 8 and 9 - scheduled for tomorrow (Wednesday 22 July). The first warning signal for the boys Gold flight is scheduled for 1200 hours followed by girls Gold, boys Silver, girls 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>> and our Instagram at @optimist_euros15. You can also see videos on our You Tube channel at 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>>

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- 1) Croatia's Palma Cargo heads the girls fleet at Pwllheli - <https://www.dropbox.com/s/0vzjezrijal976z/PalmaCargo.jpg?dl=0>
- 2) Britain's Rory Harper leads the way for the boys - https://www.dropbox.com/s/12rug1rtkn0alai/roryharper_day3.jpg?dl=0

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