

RaceAhead

RACEAHEAD UPDATE: July 18th 2011

Following the Sail for Gold Regatta in Weymouth, the **470 team** moved straight on to **Kiel Week in Germany**. Kiel Week is one of the largest sailing events in the world, attracting around 5000 sailors, and is also part of the Kiel Festival which attracts around 3 million visitors to the north of Germany every year. The regatta is also an ISAF Grade 1 event on the Olympic Class World Cup calendar.

The **51 entries in the men's 470 class** were raced in a single fleet. We started well with a solid 24th before a broken main halyard put us out of the second race. We came back strongly to claim a **6th place finish in the 3rd race**. This was a very encouraging outcome for us, especially in that we succeeded in keeping some big 470 names behind us throughout the race.

Following the opening day, the general trend of the regatta was that we sailed strong first beats but we struggled to hold our top mark positions through the race. This is good news and bad news at the same time. Highlighting this issue, in the final 3 races of the event we rounded all three first top marks inside the top 10, but we finished with 20, 44 & 32. After the event we spent time analyzing the causes of these losses and working out techniques, training plans and tactical solutions to deal with the problems.

We finished Kiel Week 30th/51. The result was not bad for this stage in the campaign, but we felt we had the potential for a top 25 overall finish. Kiel Week was a great experience and besides the racing, we spent time getting to know a lot of 470 teams and coaches, some of whom we have spent time training with since. Following the event we **took a week off during which time Asenathi flew home to Cape Town** to catch up with family and friends, having been on the road campaigning for 12 weeks.

During the break, we accepted a very kind invitation to compete at the **11 Meter World Championships** in Norway in late July. The 11 Meter is a small keel boat with a crew weight limit of 360kg. The RaceAhead team to compete at the event will be Asenathi Jim, Roger Hudson, Gerry Hegie, Rudy McNeill & Wadi Xayimpi – a young and exciting team with a promising variety of talents and skills.

Next stop on the 470 campaign was **Helsinki for the Open European Championships**. Helsinki in the summer time provides different conditions to what we had been getting used to at the previous European circuit events, with generally lighter winds and flatter water. We arrived a week early to train with a Greek and New Zealand team and to spend some time with Greek 470 guru Illias Mylondas who had kindly invited us to join his training group. This was massively helpful as the Greeks are light wind specialists and we learned a great deal about light wind set-up, tuning and techniques.

We put in a solid performance for this stage in the campaign to **finish 12th/37 in silver and 49th/74 overall**. Most encouraging was that we had some strong individual race performances, doing a much better job of converting strong early roundings into good finishing positions. In 3 races we had first top mark roundings inside the top 2 and we also managed to lead a race for the first round, all of which is good progress.

We're also delighted and very grateful to have been selected for an **ISP award** (International Solidarity Program) from the International 470 Class Association in the form of a full new **suit of Olympic 470 Sails**.

Next up is a week of physical and boat-handling training in the UK, followed by the 11 Meter Worlds in Norway and then the **London 2012 Olympic Test Event** in Weymouth in early August.

Sincere thanks to all those who support RaceAhead