

J/24 Swedish Open 2019

Falsterbokanalen 16th to 18th August

Regatta report by David Cooper UK

After the success of two Swedish teams visiting the UK for the British J/24 National Championships in July, UK teams were invited to compete in the Swedish Open at Falsterbokanalen Boatclub over the long weekend of 16th to 18th August. Two complete teams took up this offer, as well as another adventurous student who joined a Swedish team, a brave undertaking as one who didn't speak any Swedish!

We arrived at Copenhagen airport, some late Thursday evening, some Friday lunchtime. After a quick train ride across the magnificent Oresand bridge connecting Denmark to Sweden, we were very kindly met by assorted Swedish hosts and taken to Falsterbokanalen where the regatta was to take place. Here we found a bunch of industrious Swedes polishing our borrowed boats to make them perfect!

The first race was timetabled to start at 1700 hours, which seemed very late compared to what we are used to, surely that's normally time to finish! However, we were presented with a beautiful evening's sailing with a light to medium breeze and sunshine! A good turnout of 18 boats took to the course for 2 scheduled races.

First blood in race 1 went to local sailor Per-Hakan Persson and team in 'Front Runner', followed by German boat 'Rotogirl' helmed by Emily Kern. Completing the podium was the borrowed 'Silver Surfan' helmed by David Cooper. This was to be a short-lived result as when the fleet came ashore, 'Silver Surfan' had been the recipient of the regatta's first 'black flag'! Oh dear! This promoted Peter Langhans in 'Oste Strolch' onto the podium.

Race 2 was started in similar conditions. Again 'Front Runner' led the fleet home to another victory, followed by another fast German boat, Julius Hahne in 'Glen' with 'Rotogirl' in 3rd.

Racing was followed by a very welcome barbecue, with plenty of free beers, courtesy of the Swedish J/24 class association. As ever, an impromptu party followed, rumour has it that the team 'For Fun Pink' were extremely lucky to not be evicted from their accommodation...

Saturday dawned to a forecast of significantly more wind of around 18 knots. Would many hardy souls brave the big overlapping genoa?? Or would most stick to the smaller and more manageable jib? As it was, most boats stuck with jibs although a few genoas were to be seen.

Race 3 was yet another victory to 'Front Runner'. Could they be stopped, or could they win every race?? They were followed over the line by 'Hungriger Wolf' helmed by Fabian Damm, under the Danish flag, and 'Silver Surfan'.

Race 4 was held under very similar conditions. For the first time 'Front Runner' was not victorious.. victory going to 'Hungriger Wolf' followed by 'Silver Surfan' and 'Glen'.

Races 5 and 6 were held in similar, although slightly less windy, conditions. The order in race 5 being 'Rotogirl', 'Glen' and 'Silver Surfan'. In race 6 'Silver Surfan' took their first win, followed by 'Hungriger Wolf' and 'Front Runner'.

Thus, at the end of day 2, it was very close at the top, with all to play for! 'Front Runner' held the lead on 10 points after discard, with 'Silver Surfan' 2nd on 13 points, 'Hungriger Wolf' 1 point further behind on 14 and 'Rotogirl' and 'Glen' close behind on 16 points each. Could 'Front Runner' hold their nerve or would the chasing pack close in?

After racing there were more free beers, followed by an excellent 'sit-down' buffet meal in the Faltsterbokanalen Boatclub. Much dancing and revelry followed, unfortunately marred by one of the crew of 'Silver Surfan' visiting the casualty department of Malmo hospital after attempting to ride a bicycle home afterwards. We wish Shane a speedy recovery.

Sunday morning arrived with everything to play for! Could 'Front Runner' hold their advantage? Or would one of the following pack ruin their day? The wind was light... On the 2nd round the wind became very light. Which way down the last run? After a tense last 100 metres with much place changing, 'Hungriger Wolf' took their 2nd victory followed by 'Silver Surfan' and 'Rotogirl' with 'Front Runner' down in 7th place. There was now insufficient wind to allow another start.

This left 3 boats tied on 15 points at the top! 'Front Runner' from Sweden, with crew of Per-Hakan Persson, Monica Persson, Hans Thulin, Anders Thulin and Per von Andersson emerged victorious on count back by virtue of having had 3 race wins. 2nd overall came 'Hungriger Wolf' from Denmark, crewed by Fabian Damm, Jonas Lyssewski, Max Bischof, Moritz Book and Thorsten Paech' with 2 race wins. 'Silver Surfan' from the UK completed the podium (and, as 3rd placed boat given the honour of writing the regatta report!) crewed by David Cooper, Paul Williams, Izzy Savage, Shane Hewlett and Ben Maddaford.

A special prize (free entry to the 2020 Swedish Open) from the Swedish J/24 Class association to the 'best youth team under 25 years of age' was awarded to Julius Hahne, Morten Raecke, Rasmus Bounken, Tim Wegener and Tom Stryi.

Thanks must go to the crews of 18 competitive boats who provided such close competition and fun over the course of the event.

Also, many thanks to the Falsterbokanalen Boatclub, the race officials and everyone else who helped put on such a fantastic event. We will be back next year!

Finally, we specially thank Monica Persson and Per-Hakan Persson and crew who, as well as organising such a fantastic event, invited us to Sweden and lent a very fast J/24. We will be back!