

Yngling Girls

Newsletter Thirteen 24 September 2007



So.... as you may know at the beginning of this week we had some great news! The RYA have nominated us to be the Yngling Team for the 2008 Olympic Games. This means we will be the sole Yngling Team going to China.

At the beginning of 2006 the Olympic Steering Group (OSG) set criteria for selection for the 2008 Olympic Games. The first opportunity for any of the sailors to be selected was last Tuesday. Being past Olympic medallists we had to achieve a top three at both the 2007 World Championships and the 2007 Olympic Test Event in Qingdao. The OSG would then decide based on other results, competitors and weather conditions at the events if the results would be good enough to qualify.

At the beginning of August we went to China for the Olympic Test Event, having qualified for this place at the Worlds. We had passed the first hurdle, top three at the Worlds, and now had to do the same again to be eligible for selection. We made a choice not to travel with the team via Shanghai but went BA via Beijing – having avoided the airport transfers and arrived at a better time for dealing with jet lag, the trip started well. On arrival we ventured down to the container to unload the boat. We spent the first day rigging and getting used to the 30 degree temperature and the very high humidity of up to 98%.

The next couple of days were spent training on our own, we had a maximum of 3 knots of wind with limited visibility, but the training was very



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good and we felt we learned a lot in the difficult conditions. Our training was interrupted by a GBR team building trip to Shanghai. When we returned to Qingdao our Yngling foreign friends had arrived. We went straight into event preparation, moving to the venue, measurement, and training with the fleet etc. Once again the facilities in China had been improved dramatically, the Olympic Marina was fit for purpose and the number of volunteers had greatly increased, totalling 300,000 across the city of Qingdao.



The opening ceremony was a huge spectacle with the whole of the city swamped in lights and lasers. Their fascination with Andrew Lloyd-Webber classics confused us again but the firework display certainly wowed!



Day 1 and we were greeted by 12 knots, the cross tide of 15 boat lengths a minute made for interesting starts and tactics. The very confused seas and large swell certainly gave us tricky conditions and so meant a supply of sea sick tablets was very important! We sailed two solid races, finishing with a 1st and a 2nd. Day 2 and more normal Chinese conditions returned, no wind and no racing! Day 3 and the top wind speed for the day was 4 knots, the direction had changed and the tide meant for very short up winds and long down winds. We had a 1st and 7th. Day 4 again no wind and no racing. Day 5 and the timing of the tide allowed one race to be fitted in during the turn of the tide. We had another solid result finishing 2nd nearly reeling in the Russians with a gybing dual on the last run. Day 6 and more racing in very light conditions - so light that we didn't even carry our harnesses, we were that confident we wouldn't even be sitting on the side! We finished with a 3rd and 5th. Day 7 and suddenly there was wind, two races in 23 knots. We had a 4th and 1st. The final day and the medal race loomed, we were 2nd overall going into it - equal with Sally (USA) meaning that who ever beat who won overall, but the Dutch could beat us if they beat us by 3 places and the Russians if they won and we were last. We all felt the medal race experience we have gained over the year and especially at the Worlds where it all mattered has given us a great confidence. We felt tactically pre-start we were all over our game, we knew what we had to do to get a clear start, and when Sally came to attack us, match race style we were confident. When the start gun fired twice, we were happy with our transits and we could see that both the Russians and Sally had their bows ahead of ours, i.e. if we were over so were they and we would still remain 2nd overall (enough to qualify). As it turned out at the top mark only Sally was disqualified for being over the line at the start leaving us to sail a conservative race to finish 2nd and therefore 1st Overall in the event. This not only gained us qualification but the result finally takes us to World Number 1 in the ISAF ranking.



All of your support this year has been fantastic and has truly helped us in becoming number one in the World. Now is the time that every little aspect of our campaign makes a difference and to live up to our mission statement 'World Domination' we will, I am sure, be asking for contributions in what ever form from you over the next weeks and months. I hope that some of you saw the article by Andrew Longmore in this Sunday's Times, as the lead article to their Sportswomen of the Year Awards. It would be great if you would cast your vote for the Team of the Year www.timesonline.co.uk/sportswomen.

With qualification out of the way we have just spent the last few days making a Gold Medal winning plan. I am sure this is very much work in progress but it feels great to finally be on the road to Beijing..... Let the hard work commence!

