

# Scarlino ready for European Championship

## [Major Championships 2012](#)

The Finn class is returning to Tuscany in Italy for its 2012 Senior and Junior European Championships. A favourite area because of its great climate and stunning scenery, the venue once again is the Marina di Scarlino, a modern large marina located half way between the town of Follonica and Punta Ala.

The host for the championship, sponsored by energy company Sorgenia is the Club Nautico Scarlino, with the racing taking place just a short distance offshore in the Gulf of Follonica.

The Finns had a very successful European Championship at the same club in 2008 and it is with some eagerness that the sailors are returning there to begin the 2012 European sailing season in earnest.

To fit in with the rest of a very busy season, the dates are very early – in fact this is the first time the Finn Europeans have ever been held before April. However the long term forecast looks pleasant enough with temperatures in the early 20s and winds from 10-15 knots.

A week before the first race, the pre-entry was at 79 sailors from 28 nations, including 15 juniors, which is an encouraging number considering that a number of the top sailors are skipping this championship, preferred to base themselves in Palma for extensive training programmes. This includes most of the strong British team who would have been the favourites here. Both Olympic champion Ben Ainslie (GBR) – who is still getting back to fitness after an extended period off for back operation – and the current World and European champion Giles Scott (GBR) will be absent in Scarlino.

However, the event is not short of big names, and being the first major event of the year, it will be interesting to see who has gained most from winter training programmes and if anyone has obtained an edge on the others. A lot of



nations still have to make their selection for the Olympics, which should add further interest to the mix.

The absolute favourites can be narrowed down to seven or eight sailors. With the moderate conditions expected, double European Champion Ivan Kljakovic Gaspic (CRO) has to be a clear favourite. After losing out to Scott in last year's medal race, he will be looking to put that right to claim his third title.

Former world champions Rafa Trujillo (ESP) and Edward Wright (GBR) are also firm favourites. Wright, of course, won the European title back in 2006, but Trujillo has yet to even medal at a Europeans.

The runner up at the 2011 Finn Gold Cup, Pieter Jan Postma, (NED) is still looking for his first major title, but is getting closer all the time. An excellent 2011 season makes him big favourite for 2012

Other names likely to be seen up the front at some stage include Brendan Casey (AUS), Deniss Karpak (EST), Thomas Le Breton (FRA), Gasper Vincec (SLO) and Vasilij Zbogar (SLO), while 10-12 others are quite capable of winning races.

Once again there are quite a number of new faces appearing, while numerically the largest team is the 11 strong Russian team. As host nation, Italy is also fielding a strong team of 10 sailors, with Filippio Baldasaari (ITA), who has already gained selection for the 2012 Olympics, as well as the 2008 Olympian Giorgio Poggi (ITA), also strong contenders to win races.

As usual the Junior championship is harder to call. Last year's champion, Josip Olujic (CRO) is now too old, but there are plenty who will try to take his place. Watch out for Arkady Kistanov (RUS) and Milosz Wojewski (POL), the top two at last year's Silver Cup.

Equipment inspection and registration starts on Friday 16 March, before racing begin on Monday 19 March. Ten fleet races are scheduled from 12.00 each day before the medal race for the top 10 and the final race for the rest on Saturday 24 March.

You can follow the championship on the live blog at [www.finneuropeans.org/ec2012](http://www.finneuropeans.org/ec2012) and we will be reporting throughout each day to bring the latest news and results.

### **Photos:**

Taken by Marina Prinzivalli at last week's Coppa Italia Finn in Scarlino. All five scheduled races were sailed and overall victory went to Mathias Miller (GER) with a 2-1-1-2-4 scoreline. Second was Giorgio Poggi (ITA) and third Oleksy Borisov (UKR).

### **Links:**

Event website: [www.finneuropeans.org/ec2012](http://www.finneuropeans.org/ec2012)

Class website: [www.finnclass.org](http://www.finnclass.org)

Club website: [www.clubnauticoscarlino.com](http://www.clubnauticoscarlino.com)

Class Twitter feed: [http://twitter.com/Finn\\_Class](http://twitter.com/Finn_Class)

Class Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Finn-Class/110408332633>

Class YouTube Channel: [www.youtube.com/thefinnchannel](http://www.youtube.com/thefinnchannel)

# Trujillo leads after great start to Europeans in Scarlino

## [Major Championships 2012](#)

It promised much and it certainly delivered. The first day of the 2012 Finn Junior and Senior European Championship in Scarlino Italy was characterised by a shifty 8-10 knot north-westerly, moderate temperatures and some great racing. Rafa Trujillo (ESP) leads the way after placing fourth and first, with 2007 European Champion Eduard Skornyakov (RUS) in second and Florian Raudachl (AUT) in third. Vasilij Zbogor (SLO) won the first race by a nice margin while Trujillo won the second in a thrilling finish.

After a long wait for the wind to stabilise, race one got underway in 8-9 knots north-westerly. Several of the favourites started on the left but it was the right side that paid with Deniss Karpak (EST) leading the fleet round the top mark followed by Eduard Skornyakov (RUS) and Egor Terpigorev (RUS).

On the first downwind Vasilij Zbogor (SLO), who rounded in sixth, found some extra pace to move into the lead from Karpak. Zbogor then extended to the next two legs to win by around 40 seconds. Karpak crossed second with Skornyakov in third. Rafa Trujillo (ESP) was fourth.

Race two was similar except that the left side paid nicely on the first leg. Unfortunately for some, many of the favourites had gone to the right again and it cost them dearly. The Turkish team were having a good day though with Alican Kaynar (TUR) and Akif Muslubas (TUR) rounding the top mark right behind a consistent Skornyakov. However the battle turned out to be between the next two: Bjorn Allansson (SWE) and Trujillo.

While Skornyakov and Muslubas picked up yellow flags, Allansson went wide on the first downwind to move just ahead of Trujillo at the gate. Florian Raudaschl (AUT), having a great





day, moved up to third. The second upwind proved very tricky with both sides paying at times and both leaders trying to stay calm in the middle. It worked and Allansson rounded the final mark just ahead of Trujillo.

However Trujillo, made a big gain on the final downwind and for the final few hundred metres both boats were neck and neck. However it was the 2007 World Champion Trujillo, who found just that bit more pressure to slide over the finish a couple of boatlengths ahead of Allansson with Oleksiy Borisov (UKR) in third.

Trujillo commented, "These were not my conditions, 8 to 10 knots, shifty and patchy, so to make a fourth and a first is unbelievable. So I am really happy and wasn't expecting to have these results today." About the last downwind, "I was actually really happy being in second. The second upwind was really tricky. It was paying both sides with 20 degree shifts and I played the middle. But on the last downwind I had one opportunity and took the pressure and the shift, while Bjorn went too far on starboard and I got the advantage on him and that was that. We need to have some luck and today I think I used it all up."

On the venue, "I am really happy to be here. I remember being here in 2008 and that was amazing. There's always wind and it's great for sailing and I hope we have a great championship." Putting today into perspective in terms of his preparation for the Olympics, "One day like today gives you good motivation, but I am far behind where I should be."

Zbogar said on his day, "The boat was going really smoothly. I was playing in the middle of the course all the time and it paid off in the end, so I was very happy with that. I had a great first downwind, moving from sixth to first. I thought I had a very good feeling down that leg on the waves, I was surfing better and I saw the others were struggling a bit, so I just focussed on the waves and the boat was really, really fast."

"In the second race I made a huge mistake on the first beat and was just trying to catch up. I thought the wind was going to go right with the sun, but then the left paid, and I was losing a lot of places. The last downwind I got a penalty as well so I finished 11<sup>th</sup>. So I am not happy about the second race at all."

"There was a little bit up and down today and it was very unpredictable and hard to plan the upwinds but, Rafa had a great day and made very good tactical decisions."

Zbogar is about to start the Slovenian Olympics trials against Gasper Vincec (SLO). He said, "Gasper is very experienced in the Finn and this is just my third year so I still have a lot to learn. Our first trials are in Palma. I have two Olympics medal [in the Laser] and I want to get another one so I have to be focussed on not just being in front of Gasper, but being in front of most of the other guys as much as possible. With the AC45, because our team is half Finn sailors, we decided to just turn up and some those regattas, and to focus on the Finn until the Olympics. After the Olympics we will focus much more on the America's Cup."

It's been a long time since a Raudaschl was at the the front of an international fleet, but after his best first day ever at a major championship Florian Raudaschl sits in third place. He said, "I had good speed and some good luck today and then it's easy. Once you are in front in this wind then it's easier to stay there. The biggest difference for me is that I have been able to do more training. I have a coach now and I have trained more and worked less. The conditions suited me. I like the choppy water and light winds. The results were a bit unexpected, but I

had a good feeling already in my training. I am using the same gear as I did in Perth but in my head it is much better.”

In the Juniors, Michal Jodlowski (POL) leads in 22<sup>nd</sup> overall after placing 20th and 26th. But just one place behind on equal points is Dimitar Vangelov (BUL), while Tomas Hrnkal (CZE) is 20 points further back. The current Junior World Champion, Arkadiy Kistanov (RUS), struggled today and lies in 34<sup>th</sup> overall, and fourth junior. The Junior Championship is as hard fought for as the senior championship, and often more so, as for these young sailors, a win at this level is a big achievement and opens up many paths for future funding and support.

Fleet racing continues until Friday, with the medal race for the top 10 and the final race for the rest on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> March.

Follow the racing on the liver blog each day at <http://www.finneuropeans.org/ec2012/index.php/news-blog> with Twitter feed from the media team and the sailors, photos, videos and much more. All you need to know in one place.

### **Results after two races**

- 1 ESP 100 Rafael Trujillo 5
- 2 RUS 9 Eduard Skornyakov 10
- 3 AUT 3 Florian Raudaschl 10
- 4 SLO 573 Vasilij Zbogor 12
- 5 NED 842 Pieter-Jan Postma 13
- 6 CRO 524 Ivan Kljakovic Gapspic 18
- 7 UKR 1 Oleksiy Borisov 22
- 8 GER 151 Matthias Miller 23
- 9 TUR 21 Alican Kaynar 26
- 10 SWE 6 Bjorn Allansson 27

### **Juniors**

- 1 POL 13 Michal Jodlowski 46
- 2 BUL 855 Vangelov Dimitar 46
- 3 CZE 81 Tomas Hrnkal 66
- 4 RUS 6 Arkadiy Kistanov 76
- 5 HUN 728 Elemer Haidekker 76
- 6 RUS 111 Andrey Yanitsky 85
- 7 RUS 91 Sivenkov Viacheslav 87
- 8 CZE 11 Patrik Deutscher 94
- 9 POL 11 Maciej Malag 102
- 10 GBR 18 James Hadden 110

## Four hours afloat, but no racing on day two in Scarlino

### Major Championships 2012

It was never going to be the easiest of days to hold racing, and unsurprisingly the wind played tricks with the 69 boat Finn fleet at the European Championships in Scarlino, Italy for nearly four hours before the race officer called it a day with only the two races from Monday on the scoreboard.

The fleet was held ashore for an hour in the morning waiting for the wind to build as the day began still and overcast. Eventually a 8-10 knot breeze appeared from the south-west and the fleet was released about midday, with the sun trying to brea through but never really succeeding. However soon after arriving in the course area, the breeze started to fade and then clocked round and back and after three hours looked like it was in for good from the west at 5-6 knots.

The first attempt at a start was abandoned with the whole fleet bunched at the pin and then the second attempt, with boats evenly spread along the line resulted in general recall. With reports from the top mark that the wind was down to 3-4 knots again, the race officer called it a day and sent the fleet home for an early tea.

Regatta leader Rafael Trujillo (ESP) thought that the race team did their best, but in the end made the right decision. "I think it was a good decision. It was the right decision to send us on the water as it was 10 knots when we got to the course area. But it was really shifty going from 260 to 290 and back to 260 and I also think it was a good decision to send us back when he did, but I don't suppose everyone will agree with me!"

Current Junior world champion Arkadiy Kistanov (RUS) is sailing his first major regatta, and is lying in 34th overall and fourth junior. He won the Silver Cup in Moscow last year at the age of 17, so still has many years as a junior in front of him. "This week is at a much higher level, but I think the Silver Cup was more difficult sailing. My goal for the week is first, of course, but realistically I came here to try and get top three in the juniors and win a medal, though I really want to be first. But I have had problems with the boat and with beating, and I don't have good speed. I am only 85 kg, so lighter than most of the others so I will probably go fast only if the wind stays light."



The second placed junior so far is Dimitar Vangelov (BUL)“I came into the championship hoping for a medal in the juniors so I am happy with my results so far. I think I am capable of doing this.” He is being coached here by former Olympic Paul McKenzie, as he was in Perth, though he finished the world championship in last place. However the lighter winds here are playing to his strengths so far. In both races on Monday he rounded the top mark in 13<sup>th</sup> place, though dropped a few on the downwind legs. “I need to continue making good results.”

To try and catch up, three races are scheduled for Wednesday starting at 12.00. The forecast is for sunny conditions, with light winds again, but hopefully more stable. Fleet racing continues until Friday, with the medal race for the top 10 and the final race for the rest on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> March.

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Full results here: <http://www.finneuropeans.org/ec2012/index.php/results>



## Poggi wins only race but Trujillo holds onto lead

### Major Championships 2012

Three days into the 2012 Finn European Championship with just three races completed is not what it said in the brochure. Another light day with a fitful wind produced just one race on Wednesday in Scarlino, Italy. But it was a home win for 2008 Olympian Giorgio Poggi (ITA) from Alexey Selivanov (RUS) and Gasper Vincec (SLO). Rafael Trujillo (ESP) continues to hold the overall lead by four points despite placing 13th in the race.

A really sunny and warm start to the day also brought expectations of a great day for sailing, but the 69 boat fleet was going to be disappointed for the second day running. Race three got underway after a short delay in what seemed like a stable 8-10 knots onshore breeze, but it soon became clear this was just an illusion as it had already started to drop by the first mark.

The right side was paying again, with Alexey Selivanov (RUS) leading round the top mark from Giorgio Poggi (ITA), Alican Kaynar (TUR), Gasper Vincec (SLO) and Filippo Baldassari (ITA). The first downwind was all about finding pressure between the holes, and Poggi found the most to lead from Vincec and Baldassari through the gate.

The second upwind leg was shortened, though some didn't notice, and Poggi extended to hold a nice lead to drift down to the finish on the remains of the breeze. Selivanov moved back up to second, just holding off Vincec in third.

Then the wind switched off for nearly two hours before coming back in at 6-8 knots and the race team tried for a second race. It was looking good for a while, as the fleet sailed towards the brilliant sun. Ioannis Mitakis (GRE) led Ivan Kljakovic Gaspic (CRO) and Vasilij Zbogar (SLO) around the top mark only to be greeted by an abandonent flag as the wind again started to fade away.



So that was nearly six hours on the water for one race. Despite finishing in 13th place, regatta leader Rafael Trujillo (ESP) hangs on to the overall lead, while Florian Raudaschl (AUT) moves up to second after placing 12th. Eduard Skorniyakov (RUS) drops to fourth, while Pieter Jan Postma (NED) climbs to third after a 10th place finish. After three races, Postma is the only sailor to place top ten in each one. This is certainly heading towards being a high scoring championship.

Poggi described his race, “I was lucky and decided to play the right side of the course and I had some nice shifts and with pressure so I was able to cross the fleet in the middle of the upwind and then just tried to be conservative because it was not easy today and it was quite easy to lose position. The downwind was also quite difficult. It is hard to say if it was speed or just pressure differences, but it was quite tricky. You had to look behind to try and catch more gusts.”

Despite losing the Olympic trials to Baldassari last year, the two still train together. “Filippo and I have trained all winter together and we will continue doing this looking towards Rio. After this regatta we will need to make a plan for our training together before the Olympics.”

Continuing regatta leader Trujillo said, “I have mixed feelings today because I rounded the top mark of the last race in 10th after a pretty sweaty race, working hard on all the legs to come back after rounding the first mark about 20th. And then in the last downwind I lost three places, so I have mixed feelings that in spite of still leading overall, which is great, but with a feeling that I missed a couple of points, and hope that we have a bit more luck tomorrow with some breeze. This is a hard regatta for me so far. In the second race the wind dropped to three knots at the top mark and we didn't expect it to come back again.”

Selivanov commented, “I was really happy to lead round the first mark today. I just allowed myself start free of the fleet so I could go where I wanted. I started at the committee boat and tacked out to the right and had a bit more wind than those on the left. Then I just took the contour of the fleet and came back over the others. Towards the end of that leg I got some wind in the middle, but those who were right of me didn't get it so. That was strange. I thought I would be about fifth, but then they started pointing at my stern so I made a tack and went for the mark. I rounded the downwind mark about fourth and then went up the right again and got back to second.”

“And of course we had a mark change, and Postma and Baladassari went too far and lost a lot. Poggi tacked on me and I had to go out and lost a bit, but not as much, and at least I could see the new mark. I finished second, about one metre from third placed boat. It was a very close finish.”

Postma mused over his lost chances, “I missed the change of course in the first race so I was not happy with myself. I lost about six points there, so I could have been winning overall. So I need some more chances tomorrow to try to do better.”

In the junior championship, the top three remain in the same order, but gaps are starting to appear. A 16th place for Michal Jodlowski (POL) gives him a four point margin over Dimitar Vangelov (BUL) who placed 20th, while Tomas Hrnkal (CZE) is a considerable 35 points further back.

Once again three races are scheduled for Thursday starting at 12.00. The forecast again is for light winds from the south. One more race is needed to make it a championship, but two more are needed to complete the opening series, so a medal race can be held. There are just two more days of the opening series with the medal race for the top 10 and the final race for the rest scheduled for Saturday 24th March.

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### **Results after 3 races**

- 1 ESP 100 Rafael Trujillo 18
- 2 AUT 3 Florian Raudaschl 22
- 3 NED 842 Pieter-Jan Postma 23
- 4 RUS 9 Eduard Skorniyakov 24
- 5 UKR 1 Oleksiy Borisov 29
- 6 GER 151 Matthias Miller 29
- 7 CRO 524 Ivan Kljakovic Gapspic 29
- 8 SLO 573 Vasilij Zbogar 30
- 9 ITA 117 Giorgio Poggi 31
- 10ITA 123 Filippo Baldassarri 32

### **Juniors**

- 1 POL 13 Michal Jodlowski 62
- 2 BUL 855 Dimitar Vangelov 66
- 3 CZE 81 Tomas Hrnal 101

## Ioannis Mitakis takes lead in Scarlino with one race to go

### Major Championships 2012

The final day of the opening series at the 2012 Finn European Championship in Scarlino again produced just one tricky race, but has set up a thrilling finale for both the Senior and the Junior Championship. Alican Kaynar (TUR) won the race, but missed out on the medal race by two points. Third placed finisher, and double Finn Junior European Champion, Ioannis Mitakis, takes the overall lead from double European Champion Ivan Kljakovic Gaspic (CRO) and Vasilij Zbogar (SLO).

After waiting afloat for more than four hours for the wind to settle and stabilise in one direction, with the committee boat moving around to try and find some wind, finally the fleet was rewarded with another shifty, light race, which again produced a lot of changes to the overall order.

The fleet got away on the second attempt under black flag with the majority of the fleet finding better breeze on the left side of the course. Ioannis Mitakis (GRE) made the best of the first upwind to lead round the top mark from Haris Papadoupoulus (CYP), Pieter Jan Postma (NED) and Alican Kaynar (TUR).

Not much changed on the first downwind, with Mitakis extending his lead and leaving the others to fight each other. However on the second upwind, both Kaynar and Papadoupoulus went further to the left, found more pressure and passed the Greek. Many front runners paid a heavy price on this leg as pressure variations played snakes and ladders with the fleet.

The top three held onto their lead on the final downwind to the finish, with Kaynar crossing just ahead of Papadoupoulus with Mitakis in third to take the overall lead of the championship.

Behind the leading group, many of the favourites were struggling. Regatta leader Flippo Baldassari (ITA) picked up a yellow flag into the finish to drop to 19<sup>th</sup> and fifth overall. Meanwhile Vasilij Zbogar (SLO) was making a massive comeback from around 30<sup>th</sup> at the



first mark to 14<sup>th</sup> at the finish. Giorgio Poggi (ITA) crossed in 11th to drop to fourth overall. Zbogar ends the day in third, seven points off Mitakis.

However the biggest climber of the day was former double European Champion Ivan Kljakovic Gaspic (CRO), who placed sixth in the race to move up to second overall, just six points behind Mitakis.

Going into the medal race tomorrow, any of these five has a shot at the title. However only one of them is really experienced in medal races – Kljakovic Gaspic – so despite the points difference, he has to be a clear favourite. But he needs to be careful as he only has a five point margin on fifth place. It's going to be one of those races where the finishing order will almost define the overall positions. It's going to be fascinating.

The Junior is also heading for a thrilling finish. A mistake from leader Michal Jodlowski (POL) allowed second placed Dimitar Vangelov (BUL) to narrow the gap, but these two are assured gold and silver. The bronze is wide open after a high score from reigned Junior World Champion Arkadiy Kistanov (RUS). Any of next seven Juniors can technically win the bronze.

Jodlowski described his mistake, “I was in front of the Bulgarian and I was going in a nice shift on the second upwind and I could probably finish in the top 10, but I decided to keep covering him instead and I dropped about 30 places. I finished ahead of him because he got a yellow flag on the downwind, but I finished worse than my discard so he has narrowed the gap to 16 points. But I think today's race showed I can contain him no problem. So tomorrow I will just stick with him to make sure of it.”

At 21, this is Jodlowski's first and last chance at the title. “It is my first full year in Finn. I had a two year break from competitive sailing, but I did a couple of Polish Finn nationals and as it was my last year as a Junior decided to give this a go. I am enjoying it but I am very light at 83 kg, so we will see. I have been very lucky with the wind here this week.”

On his race win Kaynar, “On the first upwind, the starboard side was the longer tack and we took the breeze from the left side. I managed to get to the first mark in the top 10. Then I took the right side downwind and moved up to eighth at the gate. Then at the beginning on the second upwind I took the breeze again from the left and I moved to second, and then got to first at the top mark.”

Kaynar has been sailing Finns for just three years after switching from the Laser, where he was National Champion. “We have had very tricky conditions this week. But in this regatta Akif [Muslubas] and myself are really fighting hard and we are both doing well. This regatta forms 15 per cent of our Olympic trials, so it is important for us. It is a long trials from Perth to Sail for Gold. I am in front at the moment but there is a long way to go. And then of course we have to qualify the country in Falmouth.”

Mitakis has been in the Finn three years and has already qualified Greece for the Olympics. He was the Junior European Champion in both 2009 and 2010. He said, “I am really happy to be leading at this point. And the weather conditions were really difficult again so it's very good for me. I lost a couple of boats after choosing to go to the right side of the course on the second upwind but I didn't expect to be leading, so am very happy. Tomorrow we'll just have to see what will happen.”



Wind permitting, the medal race will be sailed Saturday at 12.00 followed by the final race for the rest. Follow the racing on the live blog at <http://www.finneuropeans.org/ec2012/index.php/news-blog> to see what happens, as it happens.

Full results at: <http://www.finneuropeans.org/ec2012/index2.php?Itemid=6>

### **Results after 6 races**

- 1 GRE 77 Ioannis Mitakis 30
- 2 CRO 524 Ivan Kljakovic Gaspic 36
- 3 SLO 573 Vasilij Zbogar 37
- 4 ITA 117 Giorgio Poggi 38
- 5 ITA 123 Filippo Baldassarri 41
- 6 NED 842 Pieter-Jan Postma 51
- 7 EST 2 Deniss Karpak 53
- 8 ESP 100 Rafael Trujillo 55
- 9 GER 151 Matthias Miller 56
- 10 TUR 7 Akif Muslubas 57

### **Juniors**

- 1 POL 13 Michal Jodlowski 84
- 2 BUL 855 Dimitar Vangelov 100
- 3 RUS 6 Arkadiy Kistanov 151

# Ioannis Mitakis wins European Finn title in style

## Major Championships 2012

The Finn European titles were decided today in the Gulf of Follonica after a week of tough, tricky racing in unusually light and shifty winds. Overall leader Ioannis Mitakis (GRE) took the senior title in style after leading the medal race from start to finish. Vasilij Zbogor (SLO) took silver with Ivan Kljakovic Gaspic (CRO) taking bronze. In the juniors Michal Jodlowski (POL) who has led all week, took the title from Dimitar Vangelov (BUL) and Andrey Yanitsky (RUS)

After leading the medal race from start to finish, Ioannis Mitakis has won the Finn European title for the first time, just two years after he won the Junior Finn European title for the second time. For the 23 year old it is a dream come true, and also perhaps a bit unexpected, but all week, the light winds have favoured him and he has demonstrated a level headedness and clear strategic thinking that has left many more experienced rivals in his wake.

After starting the week with a 13 and 35 in the strongest winds of the regatta, he never looked back and was the only sailor here to record five top ten places in a row, ending in his only win of the week in today's medal race. After a reasonable start, it looked like Kljakovic Gaspic had the upper hand, however the young Greek edged through and forced Gaspic to tack away. When they came back together Mitakis has a two boatlength lead and from there he just extended to win by nearly 75 metres.

He said, "I am really happy with this. I didn't expect to win this championship so I am really happy. I had a very good final race. For sure the light winds are my favourite conditions. Today I was really fast upwind. I started on the left and I just tried to keep close to Vasilij and Bambi, and suddenly I had the chance to pass into first and that was



it. I think the right hand side paid more with more pressure.”

“I will go back home now, and then go to the British Nationals and Finn Gold Cup in May. And then of course the Olympics. It will be my first.”

Silver medalist Vasilij Zbogar is the only sailor here to win two races, in the shortened series of just seven races, but was clearly well prepared and determined to do well. “I hoped for this result. We really worked hard this winter with Filippo and Giorgio, and all three of us battled for the top three places, so that means that we trained well. We didn't expect to do as well as this as a team, but we managed to do a really good job. Unfortunately Filippo is fourth but he is still young, and Giorgio too, was still battling in the last race for everything.”

On the new champion he said, “I know Ioannis very well and I know that in light conditions he is unbeatable. He is fast and very smart and sailing well. I made a few mistakes myself but I am still in the process of learning and I hope these mistakes get less and less during the season.”

“One problem for me was that I didn't have a sail for light winds this week. Like everybody else I expected about 8 to 12 knots of sea breeze everyday and so I didn't check in my light wind sail. I only had a medium wind sail and a strong wind sail. So that was a bit of a problem for me. When the wind was a bit stronger I managed to win two races. I just need to work a bit in the sail for light winds.”

While Mitakis led throughout the medal race, and Deniss Karpak (EST) followed in second, Kljakovic Gaspic was flagged at the top mark and had to do some turns which dropped him back. Zbogar was the main beneficiary of this but admitted, “I was flagged myself today as well, but I still had a small advantage and it was enough to stay in third place. It was very tricky. We had a bit of wind at the beginning of the race and then it was just dropping away all the time. I had no idea which side the wind was going to come in. On the second upwind I was pretty sure it would be the right because there was nothing on the left. I knew I had to go right, but the first upwind I was just struggling up the course in the middle. It was good to be there because I got two shifts, and got up to third, and with these short races, rounding in third is good.

“This is a good confidence boost going forward, though I can't celebrate too much as we go straight to Palma but I am really looking forward to that to seeing how I go against the Brits and the other top sailors there.”

In the Juniors, leader all week Michal Jodlowski (POL) was assured the title after second placed Dimitar Vangelov (BUL) picked up his second yellow flag and had to go home. The bronze medal finally went to Andrey Yanitsky (RUS) after overtaking the former bronze medal position holders Tomas Hrnal (CZE) and Arkadiy Kistanov (RUS) with an excellent sixth place finish. Kistanov was black flagged in the final race, ending his chances of a medal.

The final race itself was won by Bjorn Allansson (SWE) from Gasper Vincec (SLO) and Eduard Skornyakov (RUS)

It has been a strange week here in Scarlino. The wind really hasn't played along and has been completely unseasonable. The racing has been up and down a lot, but what is no doubt that

Ioannis Mitakis was the best sailor here this week and his cool headedness and clear thinking will be a great benefit as he approaches the biggest regatta of his life this coming summer.

Relive the racing and the championship on the live blog at <http://www.finneuropeans.org/ec2012/index.php/news-blog> which has all the links, photos and videos from the week.

The sailors are now heading to Palma for the 43 Trofeo SAR Princesa Sofia – MAPFRE regatta, the second event of the very busy European season this year as they prepare for the Olympic Games in August.

Full results: <http://www.finneuropeans.org/ec2012/index2.php?Itemid=6>

**Results after medal race** (medal race position in brackets)

- 1 GRE 77 Ioannis Mitakis 32 (1)
- 2 SLO 573 Vasilij Zbogor 43 (3)
- 3 CRO 524 Ivan Kljakovic Gaspic 48 (6)
- 4 ITA 123 Filippo Baldassarri 51 (5)
- 5 ITA 117 Giorgio Poggi 54 (8)
- 6 EST 2 Deniss Karpak 57 (2)
- 7 NED 842 Pieter-Jan Postma 59 (4)
- 8 TUR 7 Akif Muslubas 71 (7)
- 9 GER 151 Matthias Miller 74 (9)
- 10 ESP 100 Rafael Trujillo 75 (10)

**Juniors (Top 6)**

- 1 POL 13 Michal Jodlowski 112
- 2 BUL 855 Dimitar Vangelov 137
- 3 RUS 111 Andrey Yanitsky 179
- 4 CZE 81 Hrnca Tomas 190
- 5 RUS 6 Arkadiy Kistanov 201
- 6 RUS 91 Viacheslav Sivenkov 218