

## South African Team Coach Report



Brandenburg an der Havel !! What a wonderful place, with one day to stroll the ancient city filled with beautiful old churches, monuments and attractions it became clear that the friendly people of Brandenburg were great lovers of water sports in general. At the rowing club where Hilmar had arranged our accommodation "thanks again Hilmar" we were received as part of the family and our cleaning lady Jane Bauwens was already readily entrenched and trained by her German counterpart.

The clubhouse was spacious, modern and more than expected or needed. The sleeping bungalow was more of a challenge but thankfully some of the younger parents gave up their privacy to the older grumpier ones. Your patience and support for the aged is well appreciated.

When we arrived at the Regatta club I realised we had a challenge ahead of us. We were faced with wind driving rollers down the course and boat traffic up to barge size sending rollers across the course.

With typical South African resolve however and aided by our new official driver Bossie Jacobs we attempted to make the best of our scheduled training time.

All our athletes made the attempt with very little success and after realising we were the only ones crazy enough to be on the water as runs 2 & 3 were unused by other teams, we decided to wait for better conditions, none materializing however and called it a day.

Friday was no better but Wian, Manie and Garth made the attempt. Some skiing was done but because of conditions we stopped, concerned that more harm than good was being done. Later the wind subsided slightly and Heinrich and Pascal went out. It was very rough, what with rollers and boat traffic but I was amazed to see Heinrich running through both his passes and Pascal through most of his, talk about shock absorbing legs!!!!!!!!!!!!



The water then became unskiable and a long wait into the evening ensued. The die hards finally gave it another go and Pascal, Laurent and Manie tried again. After some very rough runs each we decided it was unsafe and called it a day. Thanks Garth though for doing the driving for us.

The training time therefore left much to be desired and concluded our time but for a few jumps taken by the big guns the next day. We discovered after skiing with her mom that our junior girl Shianne Addinall would be attempting the tournament although obviously in a lot of pain having broken her ankle some weeks earlier. I would like to thank Hilmar Wehner for at least allocating more water time for us although we could not make use of it. Big thanks to Jeuk as well for his friendly dock assistance.

The "Beetzee" regatta course is a marvel we can only hope and dream for in South Africa. It was clear that Hilmar Wehner, Stefan Worpel and the German Waterski Association had planned a "show" unheard of before in the sport. The program was filled with shows, events and mini tournaments in various disciplines kicked off with an opening ceremony ended with an awesome fireworks display.

After day one, the LOC obviously had its hands full but with an admirable sense of cool & calm and I am proud to say the solidarity and resolve of all teams to accept the format and ensure the success of this championship, Chief judge Joe Malenfant steered all to inevitable success.

I realised our juniors would battle this year what with Pascall & Laurent losing their training site for two seasons and Shianne's injury had not healed as hoped and would never be able to ski to her ability.

The team never gave up though and went out to do their best. Under the circumstances I think the whole team can be proud of their performances keeping in mind they were facing a really strong field.

Pascall made it to the finals in slalom and would have done the same in the jump event if he had held onto that monster 17.4 up and down. "I can't jump uncle Jonathan"????? . In the finals he went out with typical determination and managed to ski a Bronze medal. Well done Pascall and the rest of the team for doing your best and making us proud.

The open division was going to be an exciting affair. The division was the strongest I'd ever seen and so was our team. The new high flyer added to the excitement and Zane was jumping over 27 meters with it. He unfortunately could not land one to get into the finals but a few days later in the jump cup he showed he could and landed a 27.3 to win the cup and Garth came in second with a 22.4.

The joy and elation when Heinrich broke the world jump record!!!!!! What an experience, I have never seen a bunch of South Africans that out of control with joy at a tournament. Well done Heinrich you've always kept me marvelling at your achievements. Unfortunately our ecstasy was short lived when that Brit "LOL" went straight out and reclaimed his dominance with a staggering 29.9 meter jump, it was a sight to see and I personally didn't know whether to cry or cheer, I think I did a bit of both.

Our open division as a whole did well, with new kid on the block, Manie Pickard as well as others achieving P.B's. We were all set for the finals with Heinrich, Andre and Zane making the cut in multiple events. It was not to be thought because as often happens in this sport and especially at this level, that one roller or that one slipup and you are out. With a lot of heart break at the time but with no less heart and determination I feel this is what befell us with our athletes falling out of medal position event after event. Finally in the jump event our hearts were lifted when Heinrich jumped a Bronze medal.

The overall event was a very close battle for second and third place. Australia eventually took second and with something like 50 point difference South Africa took third with USA in first place.

Well done men, you competed well and kept fighting till the end. Be proud of your achievements and medals won even though you probably hoped for more individually. These things happen in Barefoot.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a final farewell to Heinrich and Eugene Sam. Heiny my boy I will always remember the good times we had and the goose bumps every time you achieved another amazing goal you set for yourself. You are a fighter and competitor that doesn't have second place in your vocabulary. You are a fine young gentleman with high morals and ethics who gracefully accepts victory or defeat, although I know you don't prefer the latter!! A word of advice if I can though, "**los die meisies**" keep footing and enjoy Australia.

Eugene, thank you for what you did for SA Barefoot, for myself and my son. You took the sport to another level and will be sorely missed. Enjoy your new home and I can't wait to see your daughters' first trick pass.

Congratulations to the LOC and chief judge Joe Malenfant for running a successful tournament. The format proved entertaining for spectators and although challenging bodes well for the growth and popularity of the sport in the future. We have used the video judging system in South Africa before with great successes. Our system was slightly different in that we had one Judge on the boat and a cameraman to ensure the shot, the video came off the boat and then three Judges, one calling tricks or passes and one doing timer reached

consensus on the boat Judges score sheet. The system was effective and not at all time consuming. I was happy to see it implemented at the Worlds and hope to see it perfected and used in South Africa.

Many thanks to the German Waterski Association, Stefan Worpel, Brandenburg, Her Mayor Dr Dietlind Tiemann and all other individuals and Bodies for making this Worlds a great successes. A special thanks to Hilmar Wehner an old friend of South African Barefoot for his input and commitment to the sport. A great curtain call Hilmar well done and thank you.

***Jonathan Strydom***

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