

Media Monitoring

Publication: **BYM Sailing & Sports News – Online**

Circulation/Audience: -

Date: **19 November 2007**

Reference: **Monsoon Cup**

Headline: **Vitoria Brasil Sailing Cup: Mathieu Richard defeats Philippe Presti in all French final**

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Vitoria Brasil Sailing Cup: Mathieu Richard defeats Philippe Presti in all French final

Monday, 19 November 2007

In a dramatic all-French finale, Mathieu Richard (FRA) and his Saba Sailing Team has defeated Philippe Presti (FRA) of Luna Rossa to win the Vitória Brasil Sailing Cup. Richard and his team of Yannick Simon, Olivier Herledant, Greg Evrard, Thierry Briend have also vaulted into the lead of the World Match Racing Tour standings, putting former leader Ian Williams (GBR) of Team Pindar into second position, now 8 points behind Richard.

“It was fantastic to win here today, but very tough sailing in the huge waves,” said Richard. “We are excited to go to Malaysia and the World Championship event next week.”

The Monsoon Cup will be the final stage in the '06-'07 World Match Racing Tour, and is one of the richest, featuring a MYR 1 million (about \$275,000) purse in total prize money. For their efforts today, Richard and his team have won the top \$50,000.00 prize, one third of the total purse of \$150,000.00.

Like yesterday, the huge South Atlantic swells which reached 3 metres in height were a factor in the racing today, but unlike the past two days, the skies were clear and a 8-12 knot sea breeze provided near-perfect match race conditions. Perhaps because of the big waves, the teams had to keep the SM 40's further apart than normal, resulting in no penalty flags and a focus on sailing technique and timing, both in the pre-starts and up the course. Off the wind this was particularly true, as a well-timed gybe on a wave could result in a decisive two-length jump in position. Several lead changes occurred today downwind due to this effect.

Presti and his team of Israël Erwan, Falxa Julien, Husson Xavier, Andre Gilles fought well against Richard in the final. As the two teams entered the final race with a 2-2 score, Presti took an early advantage and led Richard to the first windward mark. Presti tacked early onto his layline for the mark and started to luff Richard at the mark, however Presti was stalled in the waves and was forced to tack away allowing Richard to sail over the top and take the lead to the finish.

To qualify for the Finals, Richard had to first get by Paolo Cian (ITA) of Team Shosholosa, but it took all five matches in the first-to-three point semi-final series. Cian won the first, and looked to win the second as well, but a starting recall error on the race committee boat forced abandonment of that match and a re-sail, which Richard won. But Cian never gave up, winning the next two matches, and even when Richard won control off the start in the last match, Cian and team battled back all the way around the course.

This battling spirit served him well in the Petit-Finals, where he prevailed over Magnus Holmberg (SWE) of Victory Challenge in a series that went 2-1 in the Italian's favour.

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2007 World Match Racing Championship Season

Stage 7: May 23-28, Match Race Germany, Langenargen, Germany

Stage 8: July 2-8, Match Cup Sweden, Marstrand, Sweden

Stage 9: July 24-29, Portugal Match Cup, Troia, Portugal

Stage 10: August 8-12, Danish Open, Copenhagen, Denmark

Stage 11: August 14-19, St Moritz Match Race, St Moritz, Switzerland

Stage 12: September 11-16, Latium Match Cup, Rome, Italy

Stage 13: October 9-14, Bermuda Gold Cup, Hamilton, Bermuda

Stage 14: November 13-18, Brazil Sailing Cup, Vitoria, Brazil

Stage 15: Nov.28-Dec 2, Monsoon Cup, Terengganu, Malaysia

ISAF Match Racing World Championship Leaderboard (Top 8)

(After Stage 14 of 15)

1. Mathieu Richard (FRA) Saba Sailing Team, 140 points
2. Ian Williams (GBR) Team Pindar, 132 points
3. Paolo Cian (ITA) Team Shosholoza, 115 points
4. Sébastien Col (FRA) Areva Challenge, 93 points
5. Bjorn Hansen (SWE) Team Apport.net, 87 points
6. Peter Gilmour (AUS) PST, 66 points
7. Magnus Holmberg (SWE) Victory Challenge, 62 points
8. Ed Baird (USA) Alinghi, 55 points