

77th North Sea Week : Two World Champions and one manufacturer take ORC Division lead

Five sailing yachts dominated the races of the North Sea Week in the ORC division, among them two World Champions in the groups ORCi1 and ORCi2. The strongest participating boats were from X-Yachts in Denmark. Ashore, sailors enjoyed great parties and many services ranging from the weather forecast to a huge picture gallery.

Since 1922, the North Sea Week takes place every year on the Whitsun weekend. Since 1952, the races take place around Heligoland in the North Sea. Around 160 yachts did come to Heligoland on Saturday, participating in one of the several feeder races. On Sunday and Monday, there are four major offshore races scheduled, followed by parties ashore in the evenings. Furthermore, there are also races for those going back to the mainland on Monday as well as a long distance race, with this year's destination being Edinburgh in Scotland. Every other year, the long distance race is the **Pantaenius Round Skagen**, which will again take place in 2012. The Edinburgh race is a qualifier for the famous Fastnet Race.

The two main sponsors of the North Sea Week are boat Duesseldorf and SE Spezial Electronic AG. These two companies together with several other sponsors and partners make it possible to organise Germany's biggest regatta on the North Sea. Next to the fun racing, the sailors can also enjoy further attractions, which make the North Sea Week so unique. Two of the highlights on the island are the boot regatta party on Saturday before Whitsun and the Alexseal Offshore Lounge at Heligoland's harbour. A variety of services is offered to the sailors during the event, e.g. the boot weather center, where the meteorologist Dr. Meeno Schrader from Kiel explains the weather patterns in the sailing area and offers a daily weather report for the skippers. The stockmaritime picture service is also unique. Thanks to the professionals from the picture agency, hundreds of pictures are available on the internet short after the races.

Last Friday in a wonderful sunset scenery, the first race of the North Sea Week started at 8pm. The race called "Sundowner", the start of the SE Vibe Out Series, a series for ambitious crews, attracted 20 participating yachts. Among them were the ORCi2 World Champion "patent3" (GER 5533), an X-332 Sport owned by Juergen Klinghardt (NRV), and a new Judel/Vrolijk Racer 42 "Elena Nova" (GER 6500) of the ORCi1 World Champion Christian Plump (NRV). The famous German race sailor Albert Schweizer (SKWB) started as helmsman of the "Leu", a 45ft Judel/Vrolijk design owned by Dr. Claus Loewe (SKWB). The race destination was the island Heligoland. Half an hour before midnight, the first yachts arrived at Heligoland, right in time for the Welcome Party at the Alexseal Offshore Lounge in the Race Village. First ship arriving in Heligoland was Christian Plump's "Elena Nova".

50 yachts had already left for Heligoland on Friday morning, participating in the traditional feeder race, which first took place in 1910, the Haspa Private Banking Cup from Hamburg to Cuxhaven, where the 77th edition of the North Sea Week was officially started at 7pm. Whereas the majority of the yachts started from there to Heligoland on Saturday morning, the participants of the SE Vibe Out Series sailed the offshore races Hummer 1 and Hummer 2 around Heligoland. In around 9 to 11 knots of wind and sunshine, "Elena Nova" crossed the finish line just 23 seconds before the Farr 45 "Freddie Freeloader" (GER 6499) with Dennis Gerlein (SLR/FLRV) on the helm. The following race Hummer 2, the last of the three races of the SE Vibe Out Series, was also dominated by "Elena Nova", being the first boat to cross the finish line - this time 3.5 minutes before "Freddie Freeloader". Christian Plump and his crew of the "Elena Nova" won all three races of the SE Vibe Out Series in ORCi1 also on corrected time.

In the ORCi2 division, "patent3" did win all three races, also on corrected time. Thus the patent attorney from Bremen and World Champion Juergen Klinghardt with helmsman Jens Tschentscher (NRV/SKWB) could gain the overall victory of the SE Vibe Out Series and was awarded the challenge trophy, a silver lobster. "We first had trouble finding the line in the Sundowner, but finally got into our rhythm", said Klinghardt after the victory, which he celebrated at the boot regatta party in the evening.

In the division ORC 1 & 2, Dr. Claus Loewe did win the SE Vibe Out Series on his yacht "Leu". Albert Schweizer steered the yacht "Leu" across the finish line with up to 35 seconds before the second yacht. Apart from the Sundowner, "Leu" won all races on sailed time as well as on corrected time. In the parallel IRC rating, "Leu" won on corrected and sailed time all three races of the SE Vibe Out Series.

Next to the SE Vibe Out Series, "patent3" also won the BHF-Bank Cup Round Heligoland on Sunday in the ORCi2 division. "patent3" and "RelaXX" (GER 5032), an X-332 from Claudia and Holger Neugebauer (WVW), that started in the ORCi 3/4 division, were the two most successful yachts of the North Sea Week. By winning the feeder race from Bremerhaven, the BHF-Bank Cup Round Heligoland as well as the INDUCON Cup Helgolaender Acht, the crew of the "RelaXX" was awarded the North Sea Cup. The North Sea Cup is a

challenge trophy and awarded to the most successful boat of the ORC International group. Almost as successful was the XP 44 "Xenia" (GER 6544) with Ralf Laessig (WYC Bhv) on the helm. It was the first race series for the boat - just as it was for "Elena Nova". "Xenia" did win the BHF-Bank Cup Round Heligoland and the INDUCON Cup Helgolaender Acht in the ORCi1 division.

Next to the ORC races, the North Sea Week again offered the Family Cruiser Cup, which is aimed for race novices, families and crews, that want to take it easy. There is no measurement certificate required for participating in the Family Cruiser Cup and no Spinnaker or Gennaker has to be used. For a few years, the North Sea Week has advertised the Family Cruiser Cup as an addition and for promotion of new talents. Regularly, Family Cruiser Cup participants start in the ORC races the following year. Olaf Nickel (SYCH) from Westerland/Sylt won the Family Cruiser Cup, sailing a Comfortina 35 "Kiwi-Magic" double-handed with his girlfriend.

The next North Sea Week is the 78th edition of the traditional regatta. It will take place from 25th to 28th of May 2012 and will be closed off with the starting gun for the popular **Pantaenius Round Skagen Race**.

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