

The Worlds at Capri

by Chris Hufstader



Racing was excellent at the 1987 World Championship held June 14-21, on the waters of Capri, Italy.

Photo by Michelle Pender

Capri is a beautiful island to visit, and it's an even better place to go sailing. The summertime winds are usually light to moderate and quite pleasant, the sun is almost always out, and the azure blue water can bring a smile to any sailor's face. Of course, when we showed up for the 1987 J/24 Worlds, the weather was completely different from what it is usually like in June, but it was a great week for sailing because we had a little bit of everything.

The racing was excellent at this championship. The first day we had strong winds, about 14 in the lulls and up around 18 or 20 in the puffs. Carter Gowrie and his team got up to the windward mark first, followed by the Champion Francesco de Angelis and Vince Brun. The boats on the right side of the course did a little better, although Read and Curtis were a little to the left and were very close at the end of the first leg. On Read's boat, we looked to be around third or so just before the mark, but just when we were crossing Curtis, our lower pintle

came out of the gudgeon and the rudder started wobbling around, looking like it was going to break off. By the time we got it back on, all but five boats or so had passed us by, but we went to work quickly and moved back up to ninth at the finish. Before the start, both Stu Johnstone and Harry Melges were nailed by the race committee for being above the extension of the starting line within five minutes of the start, so their disqualification was noted by everybody as evidence that the race committee was going to be very tough at this regatta.

Back up at the front of the fleet, de Angelis went to work and moved into the lead, winning the race and no doubt getting his momentum in gear to grind down the fleet. Brun got second, and Gowrie fell back to sixth. Curtis recovered from a terrible spinnaker wrap at the first mark for a fifth. After the race, he said, "Velocity-wise, I think you could have used the genoa today, but the waves were so big you couldn't steer with it on top of a wave with a puff. Getting the jib

too tight also made the steering tough, because in the big puffs it would knock the bow down, so when it was cracked out, the boat just seemed to jump." Most of the fleet agreed with him and sailed with their small jibs in the marginal conditions.

Alberto Signorini won the second race in lighter air and absolutely beautiful weather. It was a shifty breeze out of the same westerly direction, where it really helped to dive in toward the island and pick a good angle to dig back in toward the middle. The shifts came with the velocity, so it was important to wait for a puff before going back into the middle. Signorini simply stayed close to the front and made his move late in the race to snag the victory, just in front of Gowrie (who sailed an excellent race) and de Angelis. Paolo Cian was leading early in the race, and to a certain extent showed the rest of us what to do on the first leg. Kenny Read was next, in one of our better finishes.

For Race 3 the wind came back up

into the 10 to 15 range, and the large ocean swells rolled back in with wind blown chop on top. The wind was fluky with the left side paying, sort of like it did the day before. The starting line was pretty short and therefore quite crowded, and the people in front at the first mark all had good starts. Ernesto Treves was the early leader, but lost it after the first leeward mark to de Angelis, and then Ed Baird. Signorini finished fourth, and Carlos Bertorelli and Antonio Santella put in appearances in the top 10. Both Curtis and Read had mediocre starts, and we ended up taking a 20 percent penalty after we fouled a guy at the leeward mark.

We sailed Race 4 in the "scirocco" wind, blowing between Capri and Sorrento (on the mainland), which is a very light and shifty direction. Baird and his team sailed a really good race, leading all the way around and just barely beating British sailor Stuart Jardine, who zoomed in out of the right corner at the very end.

The fleet started in a light to moderate breeze, and the boats that played the right and middle of the first leg did the best as the wind died. Baird, Brun and de Angelis got to the first mark ahead, and did their best to hold off the rest of us as the dying breeze veered and the fleet played jibing angles down to the jibe mark. Baird held his lead at the leeward mark as Brun and Curtis fought it out right for third behind de Angelis. On the last leeward mark, Curtis made a smooth match-racing move to get to the inside of Brun at the last second to round ahead, but lost both him and Read on the last beat. On Read's boat, we got stomped back into the 20's on the first shift of the race, and spent the rest of our day slugging our way back up to fifth. Carter Gowrie kind of did it the other way – he spent most of the race with the leaders, and then slipped back to 13th on the last leg. It was an easy thing to do in the shifty wind.

The fifth race started out in a storm. It was blowing pretty hard out of the east, and raining sideways. We all started with small jibs, and then halfway up the beat the visibility shut down, the wind died,

and it rained even harder. The clouds and fog lifted enough for us to see the mark, and since the wind had veered, those of us on the right got to the mark in good shape. This was Jim Brady's race; he had been getting some consistent finishes, and was now making a bid for the lead in winning this race. It was really too late though, since de Angelis was right there, and had the regatta wrapped up after this race.

We all shifted up to our genoas on the reaches, and the wind stayed shifty for the rest of the race. Ed Baird didn't quite get it together to beat de Angelis, and fell back to 11th. De Angelis' second clinched the regatta for him, and Signorini came back for a third on the last leg.

The same final leg, a very tricky one, proved a difficult one for us as we fell back to eighth, and Curtis sailed his throw-out. Brady and Brun got themselves into a protest, and Brun was disqualified for his throwout as well. The regatta was on for second place.

Back at the dock the de Angelis fans went absolutely crazy and threw Francesco's entire crew, as well as themselves, into the water. Francesco's tactician Raimondo Cappa and I bet each other that we wouldn't get thrown in after the regatta, and I went over to collect (bad idea). As soon as I got near the winning boat, they picked me up and spiked me head-first into the drink. The agony of defeat!



Al Constants (left) and Hiroshi Wakatade go to weather in a moderate breeze during Race 3.

Photo by Michelle Pender

The next morning I spoke with Francesco de Angelis, who said that they were going to race the final race at the request of the judges, just for good sportsmanship. They went out, pulled a perfect start at the right end, and led all the way around to win the last race. Were they rubbing it in? I think they were having such a good time winning the Worlds, they didn't want to stop. I can't say I blame them; those races were a pretty good time.

de Angelis Speaks

I got a chance to interview Francesco de Angelis after the regatta:

Q: How long have you been sailing J/24s?

A: We started sailing in 1984. We sailed the Italian and European Championships in Naples just out in front of Capri, and after that we sailed the Italian Championship in 1985, and the World Championship in Japan. We were very slow. After that last year we didn't sail and then started sailing again in January of this year (1987).

Q: What changes have you made in the way that you sail the boat to improve your speed since you sailed in Japan?

A: We improved our technique, and I think improved my feeling of the boat. Maybe now we can choose the best materials for the boat, and we learned how to tune up the boat.

Q: What have you learned specifically to improve your feeling of the boat?

A: Always sail the boat flat. Always, and when it seems to be difficult to steer. This is just a question of how long you train.

Q: Sailing with the same crew and practicing has helped a lot, hasn't it?

A: Yes, and we are close friends also, out of the boat.

Q: Have you changed the way you tune the mast since you sailed in Japan?

A: No, we just changed the mast. We use a Kenyon mast, stiffer than our old one. We can make more tension on the rig without bending the mast. We never used a tension gauge, and we move the rig tension in different conditions and try to leave as much headstay sag that I can control with the backstay, and still keep a good shape in the main. We try to have the same materials (equipment) as the other crews so, if I am not fast, I can just complain with myself. I can just forget the problem of the materials and concentrate on the race, stay out of the back . . . clear air, out of the protest room.

Q: You sailed the Italian Championship here, right?

A: Yes and the trials for the Worlds, just two weeks ago, and I think this helps a lot to know this sail area. Every day is very different, so you have to just forget the day before, and start new.

Q: Are the Italian-built boats better than U.S.-built ones?

A: I think the Italian boats are faster than they were two or three years ago, because Paolo Boido sailed in the Worlds in Newport last year, and after that he went to Tillotson-Pearson and I think he learned how to build the boats better. (I only sailed Kenny Read's boat once [96 Degrees], and it was different from mine—very free, and sensitive to the rudder. Mine seems to be slower answering compared to Read's boat. Maybe it was just the impression, but I like very much that boat. It impressed me downwind.)

Q: Is your keel minimum thickness?

A: Almost. The top is maybe a little fat. The rudder is slightly bigger, because they have some problems with too thin rudders. They break.



Photo by Chris Hufstader

1987 World Champions, from left: Raimondo Cappa, Gianpaolo Pavesi, Skipper Francesco de Angelis, Roberto Perrone Capano, and Maurizio Pavesi.



Photo by Franco Rodino

In the fifth race, Porto (I-200) rounds weather mark ahead of Estaugh (K-4195Y), Sennhauser (I-149) and Beck (KA-115).



J/24 World Championship IX
Capri, Italy
June 14-21, 1987

POS	SAIL	HELMSMAN	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	I-211	Francesco de Angelis	1	3	1	3	2	1
2	US-1987	Ed Baird	3	9	2	1	11	8
3	US-1211	Jim Brady	4	6	7	14	1	5
4	I-210	Alberto Signorini	DSQ	1	4	20	3	9
5	US-4041	Vince Brun	2	27	8	4	DSQ	4
6	US-2	David Curtis	5	8	13	6	17	6
7	US-4296	Ken Read	7	5	26	5	8	DSQ
8	US-3605	Carter Gowrie	6	2	DSQ	13	29	11
9	US-4186	Eric Arndt	19	7	38	8	7	15
10	I-142	Antonio Santella	18	15	5	25	13	16
11	K-4053	Colin Simonds	12	DSQ	19	18	4	21
12	I-24	Ernesto Treves	25	32	3	39	21	2
13	I-189	Carlo Bertorello	32	14	6	7	31	17
14	J-2675	Nobvaki Tani	9	13	26	10	18	38
15	I-192	Aurelio Dalla Vecchia	10	33	17	26	9	14
16	I-199	Paolo Cian	21	4	20	11	30	27
17	K-4115	Stuart Jardine	22	44	29	2	16	22
18	I-81	Ugo Giordano	13	30	18	47	28	7
19	K-4141	Andrew Roberts	11	17	31	31	15	29
20	K-4173	David Bedford	39	23	23	30	5	24
21	I-186	Antonio Lanza	34	34	39	16	6	18
22	K-4000	E. Warwick	8	38	12	32	RET	23
23	US-3775	Al Constants	14	19	9	53	19	DSQ
24	Z-3037	Michel Glaus	DSQ	42	11	28	26	10
25	BL-1300	Luiz Lebreiro	26	25	30	33	24	12
26	I-11	Aldo Samele	43	29	25	12	26	25
27	Z-3060	Fredy Borboen	41	16	10	24	48	28
28	K-4193	Ian Southworth	30	10	22	50	27	30
29	I-177	Niccolo' Belloni	24	31	27	22	44	20
30	KA-114	Robert M. Hagan	16	36	15	DSQ	20	38
31	I-149	Stefano Sennhauser	23	40	28	15	34	33
32	KA-85	Graeme Thorburne	15	21	41	41	22	37
33	US-4177	Harry Melges	DSQ	22	RET	9	32	19
34	US-4257	Stuart Johnstone	DSQ	12	16	DSQ	DSQ	3
35	GR-3933	Georges Andreadis	31	50	32	19	RET	13
36	KA-115	Bryan Beck	17	24	48	35	25	44
37	I-92	Claudio Recchi	29	18	35	29	41	DNC
38	I-200	Tony Porta	20	35	21	38	37	RET
39	K-4043	Nick Whipp	44	43	34	46	10	32
40	I-172	Roberto Fotticchia	33	28	51	34	45	31
41	I-124	Maurizio Bolens	29	11	DSQ	17	DSQ	DNC
42	Z-3054	Jean Claude Du Pasquier	27	53	43	45	36	39
43	G-15	Manfred Konig	50	49	DSQ	23	35	34
44	I-170	Raffaello Corradi	37	20	DSQ	21	RET	DNC
45	J-3827	Hiroshi Wakatade	49	52	24	52	24	43
46	K-4151	Chris Torrens	35	39	42	37	46	42
47	K-4202	Simon Rogers	DSQ	48	37	54	23	35
48	K-4195	Richard Estaugh	45	41	36	36	42	RET
49	K-4074	William Brogden	42	37	45	42	47	36
50	S-58	Jan Gapinski	38	54	33	39	40	RET
51	KA-0124	Alex Nemeth	RET	26	52	40	33	DNF
52	S-26	Bjorn Erixson	40	DSQ	47	49	38	40
53	BL-27	Paolo Pirani	48	57	40	44	49	45
54	K-4040	Simon Slater	36	56	46	48	43	DSQ
55	J-2697	Seishiro Fukumoto	47	55	53	43	39	46
56	KB-12	Teresa Chatfield	46	51	44	51	50	41
57	PU66040	Felipe Barchay	51	47	49	RET	DNC	DNC