

2018 Optimist World Championships – Limassol, Cyprus. 26th Aug -6th September

Team Managers Report – Shellee Nel.

The Team: All the boys were in good spirits throughout the event. Karl had a bout of vomiting and nausea on the Sunday, which seemed to be brought on by dehydration. We struggled to keep them out of the water in the heat. A day or two into the event Bryan suffered the symptoms of flu which we dosed with oranges and some paracetamol. The extreme conditions and the air-conditioning contributed to this. He recovered quickly.

All the boys were well disciplined in their behaviour and did what was required of them. With some guidance they had their stuff prepared for the bus trip every day and I didn't have to go back for anything. After the practice days they seemed to settle into the routine we set out for them. The camaraderie between the boys was a pleasure to watch as they really worked together.

The Dietary requirements of the boys did pose some challenges. The hotel catering was basic to say the least. It was home cooked food with no variety. Which posed a challenge for the fussy eaters. It did include a vegetarian option with greens and lentils. But Karl and Matt struggled. Our saving grace was that there were Pizza slices or Pasta when the boys came off the water everyday.

Breakfast consisted of corn flakes and Rice crispies, Toast, fried eggs and cheese, ham, Nutella spread. Juice and Fruit.

Event Venue: The venue was at the Famagusta nautical club on the Beach front. The boat park was on the beach in front of the Club. Each country was given a plastic storage box to put the covers etc in, with their boats parked together. Needless to say the boxes fell to pieces in the heat and didn't lock after the first day. There never seemed to be any security issues even though the public walked past constantly. The kids were encouraged to not carry their phones with them or leave them unattended.

Off the beach there was no regatta center or place for the Sailors to take shelter from the heat or sun other than in the over crowded club house. A row of porta-loo's and 6 fabric gazebos were set up between the road and the beach under some Eucalyptus trees, which offered very little shade. Again no security for the bags etc. the kids had to sit on the floor or their boat covers.

The long waits pre start made it challenging to keep the sailors focused and out of the heat.

The organisers provided a lunch foot long roll in a plastic wrapper. 1 for each sailor and a fruit. But there were no cooler boxes provided and no ice to keep the stuff cold. Which was a concern as they put chicken and turkey slices on the non-vegetarian rolls. Luckily Claire brought a soft cooler which we put the water bottles into. The Organisers didn't provide bottled water but did give a water bottle hand out which was refilled from cooled dispensing points. To supplement this we bought extra water which we froze overnight and Claire took it on the boat. We also made extra sandwiches with basic cheese and tomato and (chocolate spread for Matt) which all the boys ate before going on the water everyday. Buying food at the Club was not an option as it was very expensive.

Boats: We had a combination of Zou boats and New Blue. Both of which appeared to be new and in good condition. All the boat damage deposit was returned in full despite Bryan's Port/ Starboard incident where he chipped the corner of his boat. The organisers overlooked this. There were hoses for washing the boats but there was no process so the kids struggled to access to the water if they were in the later fleets to get to the beach and by then the boat park was full and the water ran out on a number of days.

Event Organisation: Overall even though the event was organised by IODA in conjunction with the Club the general organisation was not as formal as I have encountered before at a World Championships. Communication with the team leaders was by Whatsapp for questions and answers and the Event Microsite for all the notices, Results and Jury notices. Susan was always the default go to person which was great. The event tracker was also a great way for the folks at home to see what was going on.

Accommodation: Team RSA was accommodated in a Hotel called Tasiana which wasn't on the original NOR. We stayed with teams from Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Puerto Rico, Peru and UAE. The rooms were set up as small self-catering apartments, the boys rooms had a separate bedroom, lounge dining area and bathroom, Claire and I had and all in one room. The Rooms were all air conditioned and serviced. Clean towels on request. Not luxurious but adequate. The pool area was a hit with boys where everyone could interact. There was a communal dining area and veranda,. This accommodation was about 2,8km from the club and in the extreme heat walking was not an option. Initially we had to pay to ride the local bus but once the event started you accreditation tag got you on the bus for free.

What did come to our attention was the variety of grades of accommodation that other teams were housed in. From a 4 star resort hotel with a buffet breakfast and Dinner in walking distance of the club to ours at the bottom of the range with spaghetti every night. This was raised at the AGM as to why our teams were discriminated against and IODA's reply was that they had had no part in the organiser allocation of the accommodation or the selection of the accommodation.

Changes and recommendations.

Team uniform: the Jackets looked great but were only taken out for the plane trip. The Golf shirts although sensible lacked the team image the other teams clearly projected. I'd strongly recommend a green and Gold shirt with Team South Africa across the back. Something for the kids to swap. The rash vest and the life jackets looked amazing and we commended on the team. The tog back was too small. Last year's bag was much bigger. We couldn't even get the life jackets in them. Everyone wore their Cap off the water.

Early arrival: I do think that early arrival has its merits to get acclimatised and find your way around especially if you are crossing time zones. We ended up travelling for a full 24hrs both ways. Boat hire and support boat hire is not necessary. It will depend on the event organisers but the boats were all pre-measured so it only took each team 15min to go through measurement. The cost doesn't warrant the benefit. Our sailors had been preparing at home and got to sail on both measurement days.

Team sailing: Qualifying for the team sailing was a great achievement but our sailors were very negative about racing. Karl refused to be substituted out with one of the others. We clearly don't spend enough time playing team racing with our sailors and they have a lot to learn. I'm sure Claire will cover this in her report.

Travel arrangements are always a challenge and it boils down to cost. But we all agreed that the team would travel together and I made provision that Keagan and I would fly to Cape town to meet this obligation. At quite a lot of additional cost as the team doesn't pay my air ticket. Claire and Matt should have travelled with the team.

On the practice days the fact that Matt and Claire were committed to another event also meant that Claire wasn't available for the rest of the team to practice until Matt was finished his race on the

Saturday .Claire was also using the coach boat we had booked. Matt will also be paying double charter fee for the boat he was using in the event and the early arrival charter we had booked for him and paid. Matt also chose not to practice with the team on the second practice day as he felt he needed the rest. Clair and I decided to restrict his swimming time to encourage him to rest.

After sitting in a number of meetings with other countries I confirmed the opinion that South Africa is equally disadvantaged by its location to the other teams that have to cross the world to compete. There processes are very similar by having qualifying events and selection events. Currently the Optimist class is the only class in the country that has a structured plan for our sailors and as a result the Optimist graduates are lost to sailing because they have no short or long term goals in their sailing careers.

The difference is that the parents fund this participation completely where the other countries have a vigorous fund raising campaign with every member of the class contributing to the Worlds and continental teams. Their national championships is also a source of funding for the teams.

Thanks to the boys for a pleasurable experience and the best of luck in their sailing for the future.

Shellee