

Wind impacts racing event at Lake Tahoe



Elite sailors spent four days at Lake Tahoe, with races culminating July 23. Photo/Rebecca Hinden

By Jake Fish

Following four days of exciting racing in the sparkling waters of Lake Tahoe, Marek Zaleski (Norwalk, Conn.) became the 2017 U.S. Singlehanded Men's Champion and Hanne Weaver (Seattle) became the 2017 U.S. Singlehanded Women's Champion on Sunday.

Held in conjunction with the Laser Class U.S. National Championships and hosted by the Tahoe Yacht Club, the fleets were comprised of experienced and proven singlehanded sailors and an influx of new talented young men and women.

Zaleski's performance was good enough to claim the overall title out of 43 boats in the Full Rig fleet for the Laser Class U.S. National Championship. Although Jake Vickers was a game competitor all week, Zaleski won five of the seven races

and was the clear-cut top performer.

U.S. Singlehanded Men's Championship results:

1. Marek Zaleski, Noroton Yacht Club, 1-5-1-1-1-1-[7]- ; 10
2. Jake Vickers, Severn Sailing Association, 3-[6]-4-2-3-3-1- ; 16
3. Caleb Robinson, Sail Maine, 2-[22]-5-13-5-7-5- ; 37
4. Cameron Feves, Cabrillo Beach Yacht Club, 6-9-8-9-[16]-4-13- ; 49
5. Peter Phelan, Santa Cruz Yacht Club, 7-11-7-6-7-14-[44/DSQ]- ; 52

Complete Standings

"The altitude and the water quality are two things that are different about this venue," explained Zaleski. "I'm glad I got here early, because I was struggling when working out on my bike and the water is so clear, the Lasers float a little lower in the water, not a huge difference, but it's noticeable.

"I am campaigning for the 2020 Olympics nonstop," said Zaleski. "I have over 200 days on the water since I graduated last year and a lot of time in the gym working on my fitness. So, it's nice to see good results and that my work is paying off."

Weaver won the U.S. Singlehanded Women's Championship by a 16 point margin over Charlotte Rose. She placed second overall to Chase Carraway out of 55 boats in the Laser Radial fleet.

U.S. Singlehanded Women's Championship results:

1. Hanne Weaver, RVYC, SYC, 3-12-4-2-10-[18]- ; 31
2. Charlotte Rose, Houston Yacht Club / GCYSA, [23]-14-2-4-14-13- ; 47T
3. Kelly Cole, OCBC, 7-13-5-14-[56/OCS]-8- ; 47T
4. Lillian Myers, GCYSP, [18]-11-17-6-6-9- ; 49
5. Annika Fedde, Ventura Yacht Club, 13-26-16-27-9-[39]- ; 91

Complete Standings

“The wind and how it comes off the mountains and spreads out over the lake is the most challenging part of this sailing venue,” explained Weaver. “You really have to keep your head out of the boat.”

The race committee completed three races for the Lasers on Thursday and Friday and three races for the Laser Radials on Thursday and two on Friday. The conditions were similar both days with winds in the 6-10 knot range, primarily from 225 degrees with violent shifts making it difficult to maintain “squareness’ on the inside-outside trapezoid course.

Lack of any breeze on Saturday forced the race committee to abandon all racing. Sunday looked like a repeat of Saturday, with a slightly better, yet inconsistent, forecast model. A 10 knot westerly burst through the racing area later in the afternoon. The shifts became radical and inconsistent resulting in a postponement and general recall before getting off the Lasers just seven minutes before the warning signal deadline. The wind was brisk resulting in a shorter than expected race duration for both fleets. They completed an important sixth race for the Radials (allowing for their discard) and a seventh race for the Lasers.

Sailors eligible for the U.S. Singlehanded Sailing Championships in the men’s Laser Full Rig and women’s Laser Radial Fleets must be U.S. citizens and at least turn 17 in the calendar year of 2017. These eligible sailors raced in their respective fleets as part of the Laser Nationals competition.

Prizes were awarded to competitors meeting the eligibility rules for the U.S. Singlehanded Championship:

- George D. O’Day Trophy to the overall highest placing eligible male in the Laser Full Rig for the U.S. Singlehanded Men’s Championship.
- Helen Willis Hanley Trophy to the overall highest

placing eligible female in the Laser Radial for the U.S. Singlehanded Women's Championship.

Medals were awarded to the top three positions in each fleet.

Jake Fish is with US Sailing.