

Laser World



June 2016

**Good Luck
to all our
Olympic Sailors!**



**Laser Radial Women
Sailing World Cup 2016, Hyères**

**INTERVIEW WITH
GINTARE SCHEIDT (LTU)**

**GOLDEN LILY
BOOK REVIEW**

**FRIENDSHIPS & RIVALRY
ON THE ROAD TO RIO!**

**INTERVIEW WITH
ALISON YOUNG (GBR)**



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Once You Launch, Forget The Friendships

by Richard Aspland, World Sailing

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Tonci Stipanovic (CRO)



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Pavlos Kontides (CYP)



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Karl-Martin Rammo (EST)



Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Richard Aspland looks at the friendship and rivalry of three exceptional Laser sailors - Pavlos Kontides (CYP), Karl Martin Rammo (EST) and Tonci Stipanovic (CRO).

When you walk around the boat park on the morning of any Olympic sailing event it's not uncommon to see sailors talking, laughing, enjoying a coffee or sharing some food. But those bonds cease the moment they are out on the water, competing against each other.

They may come back and share some more jokes or tales of sailing, but then they go their own way. But what happens if the only place you can go is where your rival is? You may have had a hard day racing against a tough competitor and things have not gone your way but then you have to spend time in close proximity, debriefing, eating and living with that same person.

That is the reality for three Laser sailors heading to the Rio 2016 Olympic Games this summer. Croatia's Tonci Stipanovic, Estonia's Karl-Martin Rammo and Cyprus' Pavlos Kontides. Friends, training buddies and at this summer's Rio 2016 Olympic Games, rivals.

Stipanovic is a former Laser Radial Youth World Championship winner from Split, Croatia. Rammo, a Tallinn resident, has won the Laser Europa Cup in his homeland and Limassol's Kontides secured Cyprus' first ever Olympic medal at London 2012, a silver. They have differences in their background but the one thing that all have in common - training out of the same camp with the same coach.

Stipanovic, Rammo and Kontides are just three from a group of sailors from around Europe that train together under the tutelage of Jozo Jakelic. The three travel around the world together competing at Laser events. They share travel costs, expenses, techniques, methods, stories and some of life's greatest experiences.

One of those experiences was visiting Christ the Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro last August and World Sailing joined them on the trip.

Being in such close quarters will do one of two things - bring you closer together or tear you apart. Luckily for the trio, they have personalities that complement each other perfectly to form a close knit group. They have come together as one team.

Rammo was the last to join the training group and despite being younger and from a different culture, he was still welcomed in, "It took me a while to get used to some things," explained Rammo. "Mainly

cultural differences with them being from Mediterranean countries and me being from Scandinavia. But we have similar lifestyles and a similar way of life so it's been an easy transition for me."

Mediterranean or Scandinavian, the sailors risk friendships for a very good reason, as Kontides explains, "Being from small countries like we are and not having many sailors, this is a good way to improve and have high standards by having good people around to train with."

Cutting costs and having the high quality sailors to train with is very important, but training hard and being in close proximity to people after the same common goal must cause friction between the group. Stipanovic is quick to acknowledge this, but also knows that friendship is a stronger bond, "We do have arguments when things happen on the water. For example, some major losses of points or something, but after a couple of minutes its back to usual. Friends."

A couple of minutes isn't a long time to stay mad at someone, but it's the longer absences that Stipanovic usually notices more, "Training is fun with them. Sometimes when I'm at home training by myself I miss them. It's easier with motivation with both of them and they always push hard every session which makes me push hard also."

All three know that training together is a massive plus for them all. Everyone has to bring their 'A game' and the friendly rivalry in training only fuels the fire to improve. If one of them makes gains, it generally leads to all, as they follow the same regime with the same desire.

For three sailors like Stipanovic, Rammo and Kontides being part of a select group has its benefits. Whether it be financial or a boost in training, there is always one underlying factor which keeps them in the group, friendship.

Sailing at an Olympic Games is the pinnacle for a sailor but if you can get more than just an Olympic experience, if you can get a long lasting friendship from it, sailing can teach you much more than just how to compete. It'll teach you about life.

As for our three rivals in arms, Rammo sums them up perfectly, "Once we launch we forget the friendship part and get to be rivals, but when we are back on shore we get to be friends again."

Continental Qualifiers a hit in Africa and Asia

Jeff Martin looks at how the new country qualification criteria for the 2016 Olympic Games has led to two successful events!

The International Olympic Committee introduced a new country qualification criteria for sailing at the 2016 Olympic Games - one of the three qualification events must be a continental qualifier. In the Laser and Laser Radial special events were created for qualification in Africa and Asia. Both were a great success helped by the fact that the venues in Algiers, Algeria and Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates were able to supply a fleet of charter Lasers to eliminate the cost of shipping boats within such large continents. In Africa a record seven countries sent sailors in the Laser and Laser Radial. In Abu Dhabi fourteen countries sent entries all trying to secure a place in either the Laser or Laser Radial or both.

In the predominantly light wind African qualifier entries were limited to two per country which provided a close and balanced competition between the countries still trying to qualify. Youssef Akrouf won the men's championship with a clean sheet of first places. He had previously country qualified in the 2014 ISAF World Sailing Championships in Spain. This left the battle for the two African continental places to be fought for by Seychelles, Egypt and Angola. In a close last race contest Rodney Govinden (SEY) finished second overall with Ahmed Ragab EGY doing just enough in the last race to finish one point ahead of Manuel Lelo ANG to get the second men's place. Lelo got his just reward when Angola was subsequently awarded an IOC Tripartite place for Rio.

The women's fleet was even more competitive with a three way tie for the two women's places, split in favour of Ines Gmati from Tunisia and Imene Cherif Sahraoui from Algeria.

Abu Dhabi provided a competition that was equally close and exciting. Again there were two continental places available to each of the men's Laser and women's Laser Radial fleets at the Asian Championship. Dodging thunderstorms on several days a full series was completed with honours shared between Malaysia and Thailand. In the 41 competitor men's fleet Khairulnizam Mohamed Afendy MAS finished fifth in the medal race to secure the championship and a place for Malaysia in Rio de Janeiro. Alfendy was one place behind Keerati Bualong THA who took second overall and the second country place giving him another visit to the Olympic arena.

Kamolwan Chanyim THA reversed the country positions in the thirteen strong Women's fleet by finishing fourth in the light winds of the medal race to take the championship title and another place for Thailand in Rio. Nur Shazrin Mohamed Latif finished second in the medal race to win Malaysia's second Olympic place.

In Africa and Asia the concept of continental country qualifications worked well for Laser and Laser Radial with the highest entries ever seen. Good foundations for future growth have been laid. Certainly both continents have benefitted from specific continental country qualifiers which will hopefully be continued for 2020.



*Ahmed Ragab
African Championships 2016*



*Imene Cherif Sahraoui ALG
African Championships 2016*



*Ines Gmati TUN
African Championships 2016*



*Khairulnizam
Mohamed Afendy MAS
Keerati Bualong THA
Asian Championships 2015*



*Kamolwan Chanyim THA
Nur Shazrin Mohamed Latif MAS
Asian Championships 2015*



*Rodney Govinden SEY
African Championships 2016*

A minute with

Gintare Scheidt (LTU)

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Gintare Scheidt – past world champion, married to Robert Scheidt and Mum to two young boys, talks to Jeff Martin about Rio after the Laser Radial Worlds awards ceremony!

Five world champions in the top seven on the podium and you were one of them. How did it feel?

Well I did my maximum and I came fifth and I'm happy with this.

The competition is so hot in the Laser Radial. Since the class became Olympic no one has ever won twice. There is always a new champion coming in. Paige Railey nearly got it this time and Lily Xu had a bad day yesterday but she seems to be back on form and still a threat. How are you feeling going into Rio?

It is really exciting as it's not long now. I only started my campaign just two years before the Olympics. I wasn't going to do it but then I changed my mind and I'm here now in the top five in the world. I will do my best because I decided if I'm going to do it I'm going to do it at my maximum with the biggest goal. So now I'm really focused on it. It's like our family journey because its not only me its also my husband (Robert Scheidt). We have lots of things to sort out and organise - like tickets, etc. So we just want to enjoy the journey because it's not the first Olympics for us and we know that it goes so fast. When it's over then it's sad. So Robert and I keep reminding ourselves to just enjoy improving and enjoy this ride to the Olympics.

And you have two children?

Yes Erik and Lucas - 6 and 3 years old.

Do they follow you and Robert? Do they know what's going on?

Yes for sure - everyday we talk and they try to give me some tips. I tell them my story and what happened that day. Erik always says "Mummy you can do it, you can do it" and then he says "Come home soon".

They are really proud when we do well - you can see it in their eyes. Erik is going to come to the Olympics with us but Lucas is a bit too young so is staying with my mother in Lithuania!

Before racing I try to think of the positive things in life and happy moments so I think about my children and my husband. It doesn't matter how well you do in a regatta - the best thing is to go back and hug your kids.

Does Robert ever give you advice or tips?

I think I'm going to give Robert tips as he will race after me on the same track so he will be waiting for my overview of the regatta.

For sure I'm going to give him lots of information. If he doesn't do well I will be very disappointed.

Do you train together?

No - we talk about it but we don't train together. He has his own training partners and we have our own schedules but there are some times when it is just the two of us out on the lake when we go out. That is great.

Do you discuss your campaign with each other?

Everyday we talk about it as it is a big part of our life right now. It is what we are aiming for and so everyday we talk about mistakes and the important things we need to do to get ready. When you get into the routine of family life it's a distraction.

It must be good for both of you to have someone to talk to who has done it before and knows what it is all about!

Robert is my biggest supporter in all this. That is why I am here and that is why I am doing this - he really helps me a lot with everything and he supports me and I have help to stay with my family. I am lucky to be here. I keep thanking god that I can do this!

Well thank you for your time and giving us an insight on how you make it all work.



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Laser Radial Women's World Champion 2012



© JLDigitalMedia

2016 Laser Radial Women's World Championship, Mexico



© OnEdition 2012

Full concentration and hiking hard upwind!!



© JLDigitalMedia

2016 Laser Radial Women's World Championship, Mexico

© JLDigitalMedia



A minute with

Alison Young (GBR)

Alison Young – talks to Jeff Martin just after winning her world title at the 2016 Laser Radial World Championship in Mexico!

Congratulations you are the new World Champion - how does it feel?

Pretty cool. I didn't really expect it - going in today our fleet was so close. There were about five girls that could have won so it was really nice to come out with a victory.

What were your goals at this regatta?

We had a few areas and styles that my coach and I were working on - a few decision making ideas and a few techniques that we've moved forward so that's good. But we've still got a lot of work to do before Rio.

What point in the regatta did you think you might have a chance of the title?

After the first day of finals I thought I had put myself in a good position and was leading after that but then I had a poor second day. The thing is it's Laser racing so it is always going to be tight and it's always going to come down to the very last race so I just had to stick to my home game.

What went through your mind last night?

Just chill out and try not to think about sailing for too long. I just wanted to give myself the best shot for today.

Talk me through today - there was no wind. You were third going into the last day of racing. Did you have a strategy?

I was kind of sitting on shore and thinking is there going to be one race, two races? I was a few points behind the leader so I just had to do the best I could in the race and hope that would be enough!

Do you realise you are the first women's world champion that the Brits have had?

Yes apparently so! We have had women Olympic champions before so this year Rio is the ultimate goal. There is lots of work to do here before then to keep moving forward because we know that when we get to Rio, there are going to be seven or eight girls scrapping it out hard for the medals. It's going to be a tough regatta out there.

So from here you are going to Hyères?

Yes next stop is Hyères Regatta - we have a few goals to work on there.

When do you go out to Rio? Have you been down there much already?

We've already done a few trips. We are going in May for a training camp to learn some more about that venue and adapt technique. It's a great place to sail - a really challenging venue with a huge variety of conditions. I think the winner out there is going to be a good all rounder that keeps their head.

I understand the organisers have introduced a few more courses to give a choice of seven?

Yes they have put on three areas outside and four areas inside. So no two days are going to be the same. We are going to have to be very adaptable to changing wind conditions and changing sea states.

Take me through your sailing career.

I started sailing at about 9 years old in the Optimist but I was never a very good Opi sailor. I spent 18 months in a Topper which was great fun and then moved into the Radial as that is the youth class that we sail in the UK. Since then I've stuck with the Radial. I'm 28 now and it's been over ten years of Radial sailing. I bounced into university for a bit but I've been full time since 2008.

Who are your inspirations?

British Sailing team has a great history of being successful at the Games - there are lots of sailors there whose achievements you aspire to. Andrew Simpson stands out - he was a great sailor and a really good guy. He has helped me out in the past.

Describe a typical training day for you?

There's really no typical day in sports sailing - it's always different out on the water. We generally have some physical training like strength work or cardio and then on the water session working on technique, skills or decision making work. That's the great thing about sailing - it's always different and so much variety.

And after Rio?

After Rio is Tokyo!

So you are in it for the long run?

Yes I love racing Lasers and I've still got a lot to learn in the boat from sailing the boat to racing on the track so yes I'm in for the long run.

You revealed one of your secrets tonight – slack-lining! Do you think it helps your sailing?

It's something I picked up last year. It might be good for balance and core body strength but it's mainly just for fun

For young sailors who are moving out of Optimists or Toppers what are your top three tips to improve their sailing?

Find a good coach - someone you can communicate and work well with, keep challenging yourself and enjoy it!



© Paul Wyeth

Alison Young (GBR)



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2016 Laser Radial Women's World Championship, Mexico



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2016 Laser Radial Women's World Championship, Mexico



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Sharing the champagne on the podium in Mexico!

Golden Lily - a must read book!

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Lijia Xu, winner of the Laser Radial Olympic gold medal 2012 and Asia's first dinghy sailing gold medallist tells the story of her journey to success!

Lijia "Lilly" Xu became a headline name in the Laser Radial class when she won the Laser Radial Women's World Championship at the relatively young age of 19. It does not seem possible that a short 10 years later she has enough experience to write her sailing life story so far but that is discounting the fact that she started full time sailing at the age of 10 in a country that was then not known for international sailing.

Her book, "Golden Lily" covers 20 years of her life with amazing recall of her early days in the Optimist class through a national programme that is unique in the sailing world. It takes the reader through her path to an Olympic Bronze medal in her home country in 2008 and onwards to Olympic gold in Weymouth in 2012 and her life after retirement from sailing. It touches personal relationships and injury and gives a deep insight her training regime and her approach to sailing and life in general.

Her story is punctuated by 6 'Interludes' that cover eating, working with coaches, mental attitude, dealing with injury and fitness and 8 'Positive Affirmations' about concentration, positive thinking, team and team mates, super health, Olympics, core performance, fitness and attitudes.

For sailors it is worth buying the book for any of these 14 items alone!

Apart from containing a lot of tips to improve her sailing, the book is a gold mine of information for a person looking to improve in any sport or in life in general. It could be titled "How to succeed in sport and life and conquer adversity".

Without all the tips, the book is still a 'must read' just for the story. Everyone I met who has read the book has been amazed. I guarantee that once you start to read you will not be able to put the book down. Sir Ben Ainslie, one of the most successful sailors in Olympic history said this book is "an enthralling account of Lily's life... I commend this book to anyone interested in sailing, sport or the differences between east and west."

If you are still in doubt watch a video of Lily's acceptance speech of the 2012 Rolex ISAF World Sailor of the Year award on you tube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qxIKApmaFwE>



Jeff Martin

Lijia Xu GOLDEN Lily



Asia's first dinghy sailing gold medallist
"An enthralling account of Lily's life... I commend this book to anyone interested in sailing, sport or the differences between east and west."
Sir Ben Ainslie



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London 2012 Olympics



© Thom Touw

On the podium 2012!

Golden Lily is published by Fernhurstbooks.com and available through them or online at

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Golden-Lily-Dinghy-Sailing-Medallist/dp/190991147X>



Lijia Xu sailing at the 2016 Laser Radial Women's World Championship, Mexico