



West Coast Sailors Sweep Day 1 of Melges 24 Nationals

DETROIT, September 21, 2007 - Unforecasted and unexpected southwesterly breezes of up to sixteen knots brought smiles to the faces of most competitors during the opening day of the **2007 Audi Melges 24 U.S. National Championship**. The surprise breeze, far in excess of the 6-8 knots forecasted, propelled Californian helmsmen into the top four spots in this brutally talented 53-boat field.

PRO Tim Rumpitz recalled the first start after more than half the fleet was over the line early, although the restart was no less lively. A half-dozen minor collisions later and the boats were off, with Los Angeles Farr 40 owner **Alan Field** leading to the first mark by four boatlengths and holding his lead for a dominant wire-to-wire win. "That entire race came down to one smart move", Field said. "We overstood the first mark just a bit, allowing us to squeeze out one boat, which had to tack twice to round. Once we were in front, it was ours to lose - the rich got richer in that one." By the third leg, Field was thirty boatlengths ahead of the fleet - a rare sight in an event this full of top programs.

San Diego sailor **Bill Hardesty** (first place) and Huntington Beach's **Mark Ivey** (third place) had consistent finishes for the two-boat *Lightwave* team, owned by **David Ford** of Newport, Rhode Island. Ford sails with Ivey on *Lightwave Nano*, while World Champions Hardesty and **Brian Hutchinson** sail aboard *Lightwave Micro*, leading their teammate by 10 points. Happy that his team is doing so well, while enjoying a post-race mini-massage courtesy of sponsor The **Rehabilitation Institute of Michigan**, Ford was understandably happy at his teams performance. When asked why he thought Hardesty's boat was ten points ahead of his own, he said, "It's all me. I'm old, and I move too slowly around the boat. Bill doesn't have that handicap."

Races two and three saw building breeze, and no crew worked harder than current National Champion **Brian Porter** and his *Full Throttle* crew to pull two first-place finishes off. Just behind them in both races was current World Champ and Southern California sailmaker **Dave Ullman**, driving for **Scott Holmgren's Rosebud**.

LOCAL RACERS LESS THAN STELLAR

Race Chairman **Paul Hulse** and his *Hoodlum Racing Team* had the best finish of any of Detroit's large Melges 24 fleet with a 3rd place in race 2. Hulse led the first half of the race and held on to finish just behind Porter and Ullman, though his lower finishes in races 1 and 3 forced *Hoodlum* down to 11th position. Local champion **Bora Gulari**, helming for **Chuck Holzman's Flyer**, showed little of the speed for which he's become well-known, but expects better things tomorrow. One big surprise was rookie Melges 24 owner **Andy Robinson's DivDat Racing**. Sailing with top 2008 Olympic prospect and Detroit native **Carrie Howe** as his tactician, Robinson is lying in 13th position, just a few points behind Hoodlum. Carrie sees this class as a whole new ballgame compared to the much slower keelboat class that she'll be sailing in China next year. "This is some learning curve! You just have to be on your toes every single minute, and we're loving it. Being in the front row makes it a lot easier to sail fast."

BIG BREEZE LIKELY TOMORROW

The arrival of a morning cold front should bring even more breeze tomorrow, though it's unlikely that the forecast will keep the teams from enjoying the full night of events planned by the race organizers at Crescent Sail Yacht Club and night clubs in downtown Detroit. Hopefully they will get the sleep they need to survive hard-hiking and high-speed downhill runs on Lake St. Clair. With tonight's party heavily sponsored by sponsor Barefoot Wines, it's not going to be easy.

About Audi of America, Inc.

Audi offers a line of premium vehicles through a network of 270 dealers including the Audi A3 compact; the sporty A4 sedan, Avant and Cabriolet models; the high performance S4 sedan, Avant and Cabriolet models; the high-revving RS 4 sports sedan and Cabriolet (November 2007 launch); the all-new S5 coupe (November 2007 launch) with 354 hp; the design-leading A6 sedan and Avant; the V10-powered high performance S6 sedan; the Audi Q7 performance SUV; the new all-aluminum Audi A8; the S8 with V10 power; the all-new 2008 TT Coupe and Roadster models; and the all-new all-aluminum R8, one of the most exclusive sports cars in the world. More information is available at www.audiusa.com.

About Barefoot Cellars Wines

For over 20 years, Sonoma-based **Barefoot Cellars Wines** have received critical acclaim for their popular wines. Barefoot is a proud Sponsor/Partner of the championship and their Gold-Medal winning wines will be available throughout the event. More information on **Barefoot Cellars Wines** is available at www.barefootwine.com.

About the 2007 Audi Melges 24 U.S. National Championship

The 2007 Audi Melges 24 U.S. National Championship is hosted by **Bayview Yacht Club**, with the support of Sponsor/Partners **Audi of America, Inc.**, the **Detroit-Area Audi Metro Dealers**, **Barefoot Wines**, **Yachtscoring.com**, **Latis Yachting Solutions**, the **Detroit Medical Center's Rehabilitation Institute of Michigan**, **Rock City Marine**, **Tim Wilkes Photography**, **Penalty Box Productions**, **RejeX by Corrosion Technologies**, **News Talk 760 WJR**, **West Marine**, and **Moosejaw**.

The **Melges 24** is the most unique one-design sportboat in the world, and one of the fastest-growing one-design race classes in the world. More information on the **U.S. Melges 24 Class** is available at www.usmelges24.com. The Midwest Region's home page is www.melges24racing.com. Check the official website for daily reports, pictures, and exciting video from the course at www.melges24racing.com/nationals. Full results are available at http://www.yachtscoring.com/event_results_cumulative.

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