

Gibraltar triumphs at the 2009 PricewaterhouseCoopers International Regatta

Started in 1987 as a sailing race between the Southampton and Windsor offices, the PricewaterhouseCoopers International Regatta is now an annual international event with PwC partners and staff from around Europe taking part.

The trophy, a winch mounted on a wooden block, was taken from the defeated Windsor yacht and presented by the Windsor office to the triumphant Southampton office, and became known as the "Windsor Winch".

This is only the fifth year that Gibraltar takes part in the regatta, and as such are relative novices when compared to London, Paris or Copenhagen who have been competing in the event for twenty years.

However, after winning the event for the past two years, the Gibraltar team were keen to defend their trophy.

The Gibraltar team arrived early in order to be able to get in a day's training before the racing proper which would take place on the Saturday. Whilst many of the Gibraltar team have sailed before, they felt that they needed some practice time on the Sunfast 37s in order to familiarise themselves with this yacht, the practice day was sailed in very strong winds with wind speeds reaching 24 knots.

Unlike the strong winds from the practice day or the previous two regattas the light and variable winds on this year's race day made for challenging racing conditions.

As in previous years there were two races after setting off from Portsmouth on the Saturday.

The Gibraltar boat managed a reasonable start in the first race but was finding it difficult to achieve boat speed on the first beat. The practice day for the Gibraltar boat paid off and the well drilled manoeuvres meant that their tacking and spinnaker drills together with a number of inspired calls from the skipper really paid off and the Gibraltar boat won the first race by a comfortable margin.

The second race started well but again the Gibraltar team could not find boat speed upwind and as a result rounded the first mark in fourth place with the team from Portugal who came second in the first regatta leading this race by a considerable distance. Again like the first race excellent team work enabled the Gibraltar boat to gain significant ground on the boats ahead and on the last run they found themselves competing with the Portuguese boat for first place. At this point the wind had died and both boats found themselves in a lull but another inspired call from the skipper who managed to spot stronger wind in another part of the course meant that the Gibraltar team managed to overtake the frustrated Portuguese team and win the race. This result was significant as if the Portugal team had won the second race then although they would have been equal on points with the Gibraltar team they would have won the regatta as racing rules dictate that in the event of a tie that the better result in the last race decides the overall winner.

After the races the fleet sailed to the Isle of Wight. The dinner and prize giving at Cowes was a great success. Stories of the day's sailing were exchanged, the food was excellent and the champagne flowed and a good time was had by all.

Now Gibraltar adds its name, for a third time, to the famous Windsor Winch trophy alongside past winners which have included London, Guernsey, Paris, Copenhagen, Moscow, Switzerland, Manchester, Lisbon and of course Southampton and Windsor.

Team Photo



Back Row: Louis B Triay, Charles Lavarello (Skipper), Edgar Lavarello
Front Row: Kristian Menez, Patrick Pilcher, Colin Vaughan