

The final outcome, Ferguson retains Standards Masters title

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Moderate to fresh winds and some well proportioned waves to surf down provided an outstanding final day of racing at the Laser Masters World Championships in Hayling Bay

Two races were held in each of the classes within the giant fleet of more than 350 boats, split between the Laser Standard and Laser Radial and then into fleet based on age groups: the 'Apprentices' – 35-44 year olds, Masters – 45-54 year olds, Grand Masters – 55-65 years and for the Radials the Great Grand Masters (65+).

While New Zealand's Scott Leith had the Laser Radial Apprentice title sewn up yesterday, so today Australian Brett Beyer came out first in the Laser Standard Apprentice class. Despite posting two bullets today he still only managed to finish five points ahead of Greece's Adonis Bougiouris.

Perhaps the hardest class, being the biggest at this Championship was the **Laser Standard Masters** where the USA's **Scott Ferguson** clinching honours with a race to spare. His final tally of 15 points puts him 21 ahead of the Netherland's Arnoud Hummel, in turn just a point ahead of 1984 Olympic Finn silver medallist, American **John Bertrand**. Ferguson, who heralds from Rhode Island where his company designs masts for leading America's Cup and Volvo Ocean Race boats, was the defending champion in the class following on from his victory in hurricane-swept Halifax last year.

With four bullets and discarding a sixth going into today Ferguson said he was concerned that in the wavy conditions that he might wipe out. In fact the margin between first and second may have been closer had his principle rival Arnoud Hummel not suffered a 'death roll'.



Scott Ferguson (USA), Laser Standard Master fleet winner:
"This is my fourth Worlds. The first was in Brazil when I was third and then Spain when I was fourth and I won last year and this year.

"Originally I sailed Lasers pretty competitively but only at US National level and I didn't have a chance to go further – I had a family and got a job right out of school, so I didn't have much a chance to campaign it when I was younger. That was around 1984-5, just after the Ed Baird period.

"I live in Jamestown, RI and sail out of the Connecticut Yacht Club. It is not too far and you are into the ocean, so you get waves like we had today there.

"I don't sail a lot - with work my time is limited, but there is another guy in the top 10, Peter Shope and he is from Portsmouth near to where I live and we hooked up. He has got

seriously into the Laser so we did some training together. The downwind is huge – you can hang in upwind and if you can do the same or faster downwind you are going to be in good shape. We did some runs from Point Judith, 10 miles south west of Newport. We'd drive the boats up there and do a full downwind. It was good.

"I was a little bit surprised I did as well as I did because there are a lot of really good guys out there. A lot of things fell into place for me. Last year we didn't quite finish the series so this time it was a lot closer with Arnoud. I thought Arnoud would be a lot better than me in a lot of breeze and he is really good. I was surprised how well I was going.

"This week the conditions were good. A lot of people complain about shifty conditions, but I find that pretty challenging. I went to the University of Michigan in the mid-west so it was sailing on lakes, and they sail there competitively all the time and it is part of the game. So I enjoy it when it is challenging and shifty and not just a total drag race where you have to out hike the same guy for 10 races.