

Seventh Place Olympics Finish

Qingdao, China - August 17, 2008 - Qingdao produced a high-energy action-packed race course for the Yngling Medal Course today, just outside the breakwater to the Olympic Harbor. Our race for the Bronze Medal started with high expectations but we finished the regatta seventh overall after a collision with one mark, nearly hitting another, and getting yellow-flagged for kinetics.

It was a day of high drama on stormy Fushan Bay for the first-ever Medal Race in the Olympics, marked by torrential rain squalls and big waves. On some courses, boats were capsizing, breaking masts, and in one case pitchpoling. There was intense action on our course too, some of it our own doing.

We were first out on the course this morning ready for an awesome day of racing that we knew would test all competitors. We got comfortable in the boat and checked all our settings. The boat felt fast and we felt confident we could land the Bronze Medal. We knew that we were out of the hunt for the Gold or Silver Medals and we also knew we'd have plenty of competition for Bronze from the boats just behind us on the points table. The breeze was 14-16 knots and building all afternoon.

After a solid start towards the pin end of the line, to leeward of the boat that was third on the points table and our major competition for the bronze, we were able to pull forward on them and force them to tack away. That left us in a protected, controlling position on most of the fleet and we were able to chose our time to tack onto port on a favourable left shift.

At the weather mark we got caught between the two boats fighting for the Gold Medal. As we came into the mark in second, we made the fatal mistake of trying to tack under the lee bow of the boat that eventually won the Silver. With big waves and flooding current we were pushed below our layline and touched the mark. That wasn't in the game plan. We did a crash tack to get clear of the mark, did our penalty turn and headed down the run in eighth place with only two boats behind us. It felt surreal. Our adrenalin was pumping, we were surfing on big waves in big breeze with rain so hard it was tough to see at times.

We put in a good run, rounded the leeward mark still in eighth and then played the shifts up the middle of the course to claw back into fourth place right on the transom of our major competitor for the Bronze. We were back in the hunt again but again we were shaving the layline. This time it was a really chaotic mark rounding. The other boat hit the mark but was able to spin around it before taking their penalty turn. It was pretty ugly. We would have hit it but we did an extra double tack to clear it and were seventh around.

With nothing to lose, we went for it on the last run, pushing the boat to the limit down the waves as we pulled up into fifth position chasing our competitor for the Bronze. Apparently we were trying too hard because the on-water jury yellow flagged us for kinetics just before the finish. After more turns we finished ninth for an overall score of seventh. We gave it our best shot but we were done in by the details. Those memories will stay with us for a long, long time.

During the Olympics, our reporting has been limited by restrictions placed on us by the IOC. Those requirements end on August 27 and we'll have some more detailed updates and commentary after that, along with photographs of this amazing Olympic experience.

For now there are links to links to official photos, results, and other items of interest on our special Team 7 Qingdao Olympic Blog page. If you want to tell your friends and family about our reports, they can find them at <http://www.team7sailing.com/content/blogcategory/20/36/>.

There is a slide show at the US Sailing site. You can also watch a slideshow of the eight photographs in the archive from Day One and Day Two. Go to <http://www.sailing.org/olympics/news/24681.php>.

For results go to <http://www.sailing.org/olympics/resultscentre.php> and click on Yngling Women in the left-hand column.

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