

# Volvo 2009 Oman National Laser Championship attracts strong turnout



David Aziz from Volvo-MHD and Mohsin al Busaidy from Oman Sail presenting the Rolling Trophy to new National Champion Douwe Sickler with Tony Van Theil, RAHBC Commodore and Laser Captain looking on



The fleet just after the start sailing towards the windward buoy in very strong wind

*Douwe Sickler new national champion; Rashid Khalfan al Yahyai named best Omani sailor in one-man Olympic class sailing dinghy event*

On Friday the wind was again blowing strong. Just a notch less powerful than the day before, creating excellent sailing conditions which most of the fleet managed well. The lighter sailors wisely decided to use the smaller radial and 4.7 sails instead of the big standard sail. 3 races were held and Douwe won them all. A clear winner! A fierce battle for 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> took place in every race between Tony, Stephen and Dave Clark. Tony ended up as second followed by Stephen and Dave.

It was good to see the participation of 4 youngsters aged 14 to 16 years. Alexander Rice (14) took the "Best Youth" ranking (7<sup>th</sup> overall). A remarkable feat considering he only sailed on the first day. Paul-Henri van Thiel (15) finished 9<sup>th</sup>, Tim Street (16) on 15<sup>th</sup> and Robert van Eden (14) on 17<sup>th</sup> position. Well done boys!

Prizes sponsored by Volvo-MHD and Oman Sail were awarded to all participants by Mohsin al Busaidy (Oman Sail) and David Aziz of Volvo-MHD. Tony van Thiel (OLA Chair and event organiser) thanked the Officers Of the Day (OOD's) Fred Rourke, Stephen Martin and Mariette Verdaasdonk for the first rate management of the races. The RAHBC sailing captain, Cees van Eden congratulated Tony with the excellent organisation of the championship. Tony finished by thanking Volvo-MHD and Oman Sail for their sponsorship of the event.

Volvo has long history in

their link with sailing in the world and has been the title sponsor for this event for the second year. David Aziz thanked the organisation and expressed his commitment for further support next year.

Tony also thanked Oman Sail's Mohsin al Busaidy for his presence at the ceremony. Mohsin recently became the first Arab sailor to sail non-stop around the world (in 76 days). Oman Sail is an exciting new initiative, guided and supported by the Ministry of Tourism, whose aim is to rekindle Oman's long and glorious maritime heritage. The Oman Sail Academy has started training young Omanis and it is very likely that a strong National squad of Laser sailors will be competing in the Laser Nationals next year. The 2010 Asian Beach Games which will be held in Oman will also feature Lasers as one of the sailing events. Start training!

The Laser is a small single sail boat sailed by one person. It is an Olympic single design class which is very popular around the world. Laser sailing is a fantastic sport which can be practised in Oman throughout the year. In strong winds the sailing is very physical; the boat gives you a great workout. With Oman's strong history of sailing, good winds, beautiful beaches and deep blue sea, Laser sailing has the prospective to become a true national sport with the potential of Omani participation in world class events such as the Asian and Olympic Games.



Excellent sailing conditions made for a very exciting competition



The winners (best Overall 3/2/1 on the left and best Omani 1/2/3 on the right) with David Aziz from Volvo-MHD and Mohsin al Busaidy from Oman Sail in the middle

THE Volvo 2009 Oman National Championship for Lasers (one man Olympic class sailing dinghies), sponsored by MHD LLC, was kicked off for the 27<sup>th</sup> time last weekend from the beach off the Ras al Hamra Recreation Centre. Twenty-four sailors competed in the event organised by the Oman Laser Association and Ras Al Hamra Boat Club (RAHBC) with participants from Royal Oman Navy, Castaways (Civil Aviation Recreation Club), Oman Sail and RAHBC.

Douwe Sickler came out on top with 9 points (out of 8 races with one discard). Second place was for Tony van Thiel (16 points) with Stephen Rice following closely as third with 19 points.

Rashid Khalfan al Yahyai from RNO-Wudam was the best Omani sailor at 11<sup>th</sup> place overall, an excellent performance. It is the third time he takes this position. Abdulhakeem al Kiyumi from Caste-

ways came second. Last year they scored the opposite with Hakim on first and Rashid on second place. Mafoud al Zarafi from RNO-Wudam took the third place. He only sailed two races and would have gone on much stronger but hurt himself during a capsize after which he had to abandon further participation.

The first racing day saw very strong easterly winds throughout the day. Wind speeds up to 20 knots (force 5) created very demanding conditions which only part of the fleet could handle. The first race started with 22 sailors. Only 14 were able to complete the course. The number of finishers reduced in every race to only 7 in the fifth and final event of the day. Those that made that last race came back to the beach totally exhausted. Sailing a Laser in strong winds is physically demanding. One has to be very fit! At the end of day-1 Douwe had 2 wins and was already 3 points clear of Tony.

**Final results:**

No	Name	Points	Comment
1	Douwe Sickler	9	Overall 1st Place
2	Tony van Thiel	16	Overall 2nd Place
3	Stephen Rice	19	Overall 3rd Place
4	Dave Clark	25	
5	Tony Males	44	
6	Gordon Whitley	51	
7	Alexander Rice	82	Best Youth (14)
8	Victoria Grainger	85	Best Lady
9	Paul-Henri van Thiel	92	Youth: (15)
10	Joost Bloemarts	94	
11	Rashid Khalfan al Yahyai	95	Best Omani 1st Place
12	Steve Williams	111	
13	Jack Tarr	113	
14	Abdulhakeem al Kiyumi	122	Best Omani 2nd Place
15	Tim Street	126	Youth: (16)
16	Aly Brandenburg	132	
17	Cees van Eden	134	
18	Mafoud bin Mohd al Zarafi	145	Best Omani 3rd Place
19	Robert van Eden	155	Youth: (14)
20	Abdullah bin Said al Habsi	159	
21	David Price	163	
22	Peter Evans	169	Great Grand Master (over 65)
23	Osman Bilal	172	Wooden Spoon
24	Jamil bin Hassan al Hadrami	172	Wooden Spoon