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## RELOADED Blasts BMW J/24 Europeans

(Dublin, Ireland)- In ideal conditions - moderate to fresh south-easterly winds and sunshine - the BMW J/24 European Championships concluded at Howth with four back-to-back races to complete the full 10-race program. Top of the table was the American team of RELOADED (Mark Penfold) with 34 points, three ahead of the leading European entry IL RICIO (Ian Southworth/Chris McLaughlin) which takes the European Championship trophy.



For the 210 competitors from nine countries this year's J/24 Europeans was a resounding success both on and off the water. Despite the fact that the event had seen real, honest-to-goodness, nuclear gale conditions the first day. That day (Monday) fell victim to the weather, when winds in excess of 30 knots and gusts over 50 knots left the Principal Race Officer David Lovegrove with no option other than to abandon racing.

A major factor in the event's success was the generous sponsorship from BMW Ireland whose displays added immensely to the occasion. BMW's contribution was huge, not just in financial terms but also by way of support in several other key areas. The Race Management team, led by Principal Race Officer David Lovegrove, deservedly received countless plaudits for completing the 10-race schedule despite severe weather conditions preventing two full days of racing. The quality of the courses and the efficiency of the race management were also applauded.



Ashore, the pre-event measurement and registration went smoothly and the craning in and out of 42 boats was an exercise in real co-ordination by the marine staff. Organising Committee Chairman Derek Bothwell paid tribute to the core group on his committee who handled general administration, measurement, accommodation, PR and social activities and to the 60 volunteers who helped in other ways such as RIB drivers, committee and mark boats personnel, race office etc.

With the exception of their discard of a 20th in the fifth race, RELOADED was consistently in the top four in most races and had one bullet, while closest rivals IL RICIO had two bullets and only a 9th to discard. That they had some 28 points to spare over the third placed SERCO (Bob Turner) emphasized their dominance over the series. The German champion ROTOMAN (Kai Mares) was only a point behind in 4th place and won the final race of the regatta while Stuart Jardine, the oldest helm in the championship, had the distinction of winning three races, including the first two races of the final day. Another German boat HUNGRIGER WOLF (Johann Huhn) had six top ten results to earn 6th overall.



Local boat JIBBERISH (O'Kelly/Wormald/Walsh) enjoyed its best result when finishing second behind STOUCHE (Jardine) in the seventh race while German entry JJONE (Frithjof Schade) was looking at the same transom in the eighth race. The Southworth/McLaughlin crew topped the fleet in the penultimate race followed by the Hungarian boat NAVISCON (Farkas Litkey) while SERCO took second behind ROTOMAN in the final race.



Needing to beat their US rivals by several places in the last race to take 1st overall, IL RICIO could only manage an 8th to RELOADED's 5th. The leading Irish crew was HARD ON PORT (Flor O'Driscoll, HYC) in 10th overall with JAMAIS ENCORE (John-Patrick McCaldin, Lough Erne YC) next best in 17th.

The 42-boat fleet had faced a tough schedule of five back-to-back races on the third day of the regatta, sailed in ideal conditions. They made up for the weather-affected program and it was the consistency of the sole American entry and a leading UK contender over those five races which put them very much in command going into the final day.

RELOADED (Mark Penfold, Rochester YC) with Mike Ingham on helm, won the first race of the day, sailed in a brisk westerly, with Irish champion Flor O'Driscoll (Hard on Port, HYC) producing the best local result to date by finishing 2nd ahead of the much-fancied IL RICIO (Ian Southworth/Chris McLaughlin, RCYC Cowes).

The British boat moved up a gear in the second race, winning from defending champions SERCO (Bob Turner, Castle Cove SC) and the Greek champions EVNIKI (Aitsiadis Dimitrios) but RELOADED bounced back by taking the gun on the series' 4th race ahead of SERCO again and JELI (Stig McDonald, Royal Western YC).

Race 5 in the series saw a complete reversal of fortunes, with the honours going to boats not previously in the frame. Victory went to JAWBREAKER (David Cooper, Royal Western YC) in front of German boat JJONE (Frithjof Schade, Joersfelder SC) and the Italian champions LA SUPERBA (Ignazio Bonanno, C V Marina Militara). At the same time, it proved disastrous for RELOADED and SERCO who finished 20th and 22nd respectively. Added to a black flag on the opening race, that result had a significant impact on SERCO's chances of retaining the trophy. The fifth race of a long day was a triumph for one of the J/24 Class stalwarts Stuart Jardine whose STOUCHE headed HUNGRIDER WOLF (Johann Huhn, SVAOe) and RELOADED to the finishing line. With one discard in force at the moment, RELOADED had just two points of a margin over IL RICIO, with SERCO 21 points adrift in the bronze medal position. [Sailing photo credits- FOTOSAIL](#)  
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