



Event Summary Report – Final



Wind Brasil 2008 . . .

began with the Brazilian Open Championship from 21st to 23rd November in Fortaleza, Ceara. This championship was followed by the Brazilian Formula Windsurfing Grand Prix, the final of the 2008 Formula World Tour, from 24th to 30th November.

Fortaleza first hosted an international windsurfing event in 1997; the "Ceara Wind " strategy, a partnership between Arrow Marketing and the State of Ceara, began. Now in its 11th year this collaboration continues to deliver one of the world's best known, and best loved, windsurfing events; bringing into focus the incredible natural resources available to wind driven enthusiasts!

Brazilian Championships.

The event had strong winds every day, around 19 knots, and an atmosphere of high expectations among the competitors. Paulo Reis (BRA 333) from São Paulo, after a slow start, achieved a good result and finished in second position. Willhelm Schurmann (BRA 999) fought hard on the last day to reach a good position, and finished the competition in third place. It was Gabriel Browne (BRA 50), known as Biel, who was declared the winner. At 17 years of age he showed great maturity and determination to take the title, a revelation and inspiration for the young generation.

Grand Prix - Day 1.

Three races were scheduled for the day; with a wind forecast of between 20-25 knots. Nerves got the better of Hubert Mokrzycki (POL 25) with an OCS on the first start of the day. There was drama also for event favourite Gonzalo Costa Hoevel (ARG 3). Shortly before the warning signal the mast went through the head on his 9.8, forcing him to race on 10.7. Clearly overpowered, Gonzalo considered himself fortunate to finish the race in 5th! Recently crowned Brazilian Champion, Gabriel Browne (BRA 50) overhauled the race leader, and European Champion, Ross Williams (GBR 83) to take 1st place in race 1. Top ranked Brazilian racers Paulo Dos Reis (BRA 3333) and Willhelm Schurmann (BRA 999) completed the top 5 with 3rd and 4th places respectively.

The next 2 races followed a pattern, at least for the top 5, although places were exchanged and we saw different winners for race 2 (Paulo) and race 3 (Gonzalo). Only Fabio Melo (BRA 74) made an impression on these top 5 with a 3rd place in race 2. Clearly local knowledge was an advantage as was race readiness, with many European sailors struggling with form since many had not competed on their formula equipment since the September Worlds in Portugal.



However both Paulo and Gabriel put in very consistent performances, coping better with the gusty and shifty conditions, to finish tied on 6 points. On the tie break Paulo edged "Biel" into second place.

Gabriel was satisfied with his first day: "I started slowly at first but gradually I started putting in my tacks at the right moment, gaining places and holding on to my position. I had a poor start in race 3 so was happy to climb back into 3rd place. I guess I am happy - a good start to the grand prix."

Hubert remained philosophical about his: "not so good start, lack of race practice was telling for me. It was very gusty, with winds reaching 32 knots at times; but tomorrow's another day."



The race area, located just in front of the Marina Park Hotel, the host venue, affords easy access to spectators and quick returns to the beach / harbour between races for competitors.

With wind forecast for everyday the scene was set for an exciting and full series of races here in Fortaleza to end the 2008 Grand Prix World Tour.

Grand Prix - Day 2.

Four races were scheduled for day 2; the course was two laps with a longer leg than day 1 and an upwind finish.



It was the turn of Pawel Hlavaty (POL 11) to hit the line early in the first race of the day and was disqualified. But his was not the "mistake of the day"; that unwanted award went to Ross Williams (GBR 83) who was leading the race from the start until he rounded the upwind mark for the second time. However, he misunderstood the course and headed for the finish. Not a good start to the day. Event leader Paulo Dos Reis (BRA 3333) was able to capitalise on the mistake, overtook Fabio Melo (BRA 74) on the last leg to the finish, and claimed first place.

Race 5, the second of the day, started badly for Ross, who with 4 other sailors sailed to the left side of the course when a shift in the wind favoured the right side. It was "catch up" for them for the rest of the race. It was Hubert Mokrzycki (POL 25) who, with an excellent start, led the race from start to finish. Gonzalo Costa Hoevel (ARG 3) had another solid race, adding a second place to his third in race 4.

A fin change in the rest period paid off for Gonzalo, who sailed brilliantly in races 6 & 7; and with 2 bullets moved to the top of the Brazilian Grand Prix. Victor Melo (BRA 2497) was the star Brazilian performer in race 6 with a second place, just ahead of his younger brother Fabio. Ross managed to put the poor start in earlier races behind him; and for most of the race looked to be third. After the last downwind his footstrap broke - losing him many places, but a determined sprint to the finish saw him claw back from 7th to 4th.



No dramas in the final race of the day - where Gonzalo held a 20 sec lead into the finish ahead of Gabriel Browne (BRA 50), Biel's best race of the day.

At the close of play - Gonzalo took a 2 point lead into day 3, ahead of Brazilians Paulo Dos Reis and Gabriel Browne. A little way behind, and separated by one point, Fabio Melo and Ross Williams, in 4th and 5th place respectively.



Another exciting day's racing off Marina Park Hotel, Fortaleza - at the final of the 2008 Grand Prix.

Grand Prix - Day 3.

Light winds and bigger sails - the story of the day; plus 2 race wins for Gonzalo Costa Hoevel (ARG 3), who consolidated his position as leader of the "Wind Brasil" Grand Prix.

Three races were scheduled for day three - starting on the hour, every hour, from noon.



It seemed everyone was a little nervous on the first race of every day! Day 3 was no exception, with 2 "over the line" early in race 8 - Paulo Dos Reis (BRA 3333) and Hubert Mokrzycki (POL 25). Ross Williams (GBR 83) recovered well from the previous day's disappointments - always in the leading 3 or 4 boards - he won the race ahead of Willhelm Schurmann (BRA 999), who had his best day so far, and Gonzalo. However recovery of the day must go to Gabriel Browne (BRA 50) who despite a dreadful start, having been blocked on the start line, finished a creditable 4th.

Ross seemed to have race 9 in the bag after 2 laps of the course. However the winds were gusty and shifty, and at the end of the last upwind leg Gonzalo came from behind, sailed through the middle of the course to reach the last mark in front of Pawel Hlavaty (POL 11) and Ross, and held on to his lead to the finish. Gabriel again recovered from a poor start to finish in 5th place, ensuring he held on to his second place overall in the series.

Race 10, the third and last race of the day, was to be the best for "local racer" Fabio Melo (BRA 74). Swopping the lead with Gonzalo throughout the race, he was unlucky not to get a first, and had to content himself with second place. Willhelm and Ross finished 3rd and 4th respectively, which was enough to see Ross jump above Paulo into 3rd overall, and Willhelm to move into 5th.



Grand Prix - Day 4.

Stronger winds than day 4 were forecast, and it looked to be building in strength during the morning as competitors were preparing and testing. However the wind eased off a little, but remained gusty, tempting most racers to take big sails.

Race 11, the first of the day, started without incident - no one crossed the line early! Willhelm Schurmann (BRA 999) and Victor Melo (BRA 2497) got the best start, but at the first windward mark they were joined by Gonzalo Costa Hoevel (ARG 3) and Ross Williams (GBR 83). By the end of the first lap Paulo Dos Reis (BRA 3333) and Gabriel Browne (BRA 50) had caught up with the leading bunch, and it was this group that were to fight to the finish for top 5 places. Gonzalo was forced to retire with a broken fin, leaving Willhelm to claim first place - his first of the Grand Prix.



Race 12 and Willhelm looked unstoppable . . . a great start and leading at mark 1 on first lap . . . then he crashed on the downwind, allowing Gonzalo (1st) and Gabriel (2nd) to overtake, positions they held onto until the end of the race.

Approaching the last gate before the finish Ross Williams (GBR 83), under pressure from Paulo Dos Reis, took a different route which saw him squeeze past the mark into 3rd position ahead of Paulo (4th) and Willhelm (5th). These



top 5 finishers were to find themselves in exactly the same positions in the overall rankings after 12 races!

Race 13 and tensions were clearly mounting; many sailors very close on points, and few opportunities left for others to mount a challenge for a top 5 position! No surprise that a general recall was signalled by the race officer, Bertrand Colfort; and with the restart, an individual recall. Pawel Hlavaty (POL 11) was over the line early, a big mistake, as he was to lead the race from start to finish. However, chasing him all the way were Fabio Melo (BRA 74) and BRA 999. Fabio held off the challenge from Wilhelm until the last gate - only to see him cross the finish line first and claim another win. It was an exciting finish with the top 5 separated only by a matter of seconds.



Gonzalo did not have his best day -but seemed to have done enough to clinch the Grand Prix title. Meanwhile it was even closer between 2nd and 5th as we headed into the last day of the Wind Brasil Grand Prix and the last 2 races of the 2008 Formula Windsurfing World Tour.

Grand Prix - Day 5.

Today's racing would decide the places 2nd to 5th in the 2008 Wind Brasil Grand Prix.



The chasing pack would know their fate at the end of the last race of the series - there is a local saying here in Fortaleza, the last race decides the winners! Similar winds to yesterday were forecast, but to make racing more interesting there was a swell to contend with, and two "gates" (marks of the course) to negotiate.

Race 14, and two sailors were over eager to get a good start, the individual recall flag was hoisted on the start boat, but the sailors did not return. Fabio Melo (BRA 74) and Hubert Mokrzycki (POL 25) were later disqualified. Three sailors, leading contenders for a podium position, battled it out for the top points. It was Ross Williams (GBR 83) who crossed the finish line ahead of close rivals Wilhelm Schurmann (BRA 999) and Gabriel Browne (BRA 50) - a result that after 14 races moved him into second overall.



Race 15, and the spectators on the harbour wall in front of the Marina Park Hotel were treated to a thrilling finale to this final race of the 2008 Formula World Tour. This time Fabio made no mistake at the start, and with brother Victor (BRA 2497) led the sailors to the first, windward, gate.

Ross, followed by Gabriel, was close behind and needed to keep one place ahead of Biel to retain second place overall. As the sailors fought their way around the second lap it was Gabriel who moved ahead of Ross, and held off the challenge of Wilhelm Schurmann (BRA 999) who sailed a storming 2 laps to move ahead of Ross into 3rd place. Fabio retained his lead to the finish; and Gabriel's second place in race 15 earned him second place in the overall event ranking.





On the podium at the prize giving were:

- 1st Gonzalo Costa Hoevel (ARG 3)
- 2nd Gabriel Browne (BRA 50)
- 3rd Ross Williams (GBR 83)



2008 Grand Prix Series - the Winners

The 2008 World Tour Series comprised 4 events:

-  Sines, Portugal;
-  Sopot, Poland;
-  Allegro Cup, Leba, Poland;
-  and Wind Brasil, Fortaleaza, Brazil.

Gonzalo Costa Hoevel's win in Fortaleaza lifts him into first place in the series and top of the Formula Windsurfing World Ranking; completing a good year for him.

1st - Gonzalo Costa Hoevel (ARG 3)

2nd - Steve Allen (AUS 0)

3rd - Ross Williams (GBR 83)

4th - Jesper Vesterstrom (DEN 111)

5th - Willhelm Schurman (BRA 999)

