

South African sailors at the 2011 Laser SB3 Worlds

"The South African flag flew high over the Torquay marina on the south coast of England on Friday as the S A sailing team won the 14th and final race of the 2011 Laser SB3 World Championships.

This gave the South Africans a 7th place overall after a tough 5 days during which 103 teams from 13 countries battled it out for the world title.

This year the title went to a UK team led by the crack British helmsman Geoff Carveth, a previous SB3 World Champion and 5 time winner of the UK Champion of Champions Trophy.

A key objective in preparing the SA team for this championship was to give one of South Africa's most talented young helmsmen, Asenathi Jim, his first opportunity to compete internationally at a senior level.

Asenathi, who turned 19 in January, owes his excellent grounding in the sport to the Izivunguvungu Sailing School in Simonstown. In 2009 he joined an advanced training program run by the RaceAhead Foundation and over the following two years had the opportunity of training and racing extensively with some of SA's most experienced international sailors. During this time he also attended three SAS training camps and a SAS Level 1 coaching course.

This talented youngster distinguished himself last year by finishing 9th in the 2010 ISAF World Youth Championships and then going on to finish 5th in a field of 83 teams in the 2010 World Championships of the 420 Class Dinghy. The 420 dinghy is used around the world as a youth training boat and is a natural stepping stone to the 470 dinghy used in the Olympic games.

As a next step Asenathi was invited by RaceAhead skipper Roger Hudson to helm the Laser SB3 in their world championship campaign this year. In January he joined the experienced SB3 team of Roger Hudson, Wandisile Xayimpi and Marlon Jones, who between them had picked up 5 silver medals and a bronze medal in the past three World Championships. This has exposed him to an entirely new level of training and of international competition over the recent months.

In finishing 7th in the 2011 World Championship the South Africans beat the top-rated Australian team of Nathan Outteridge, Tom Slingsby and Ian Brown. Outteridge was 49er World Champion 2008 & 2009, and is currently International Moth World Champion. Slingsby is currently Laser World Champion and ISAF World Sailor of the Year 2010, while Brown is an Olympic

470 bronze medalist.

The South Africans also finished ahead of the Russian team led by Olympic 49er silver medalist Rodian Luka, as well as the 2010 SB3 World Champions.

After this valuable stepping stone towards top level international racing, Asenathi now teams up again with Roger in the Olympic 470 Class. The team have been training and preparing in the 470 since early this year and will now start racing on the European Olympic Class circuit, with a goal of tackling the Olympic trials in a year's time. Getting to grips with racing the highly technical 470 at an Olympic level is widely regarded as one of the toughest challenges in the sport of dinghy racing.

Roger Hudson brings a wealth of international racing and campaign experience to the 470 partnership. Over the past three years he has achieved 3 World Championship 2nd places, an Italian National Championship 2nd place and a British National Championship win. In 2010 he competed in the Melges 24 Italian Volvo Cup circuit and also on the European and World Match Racing Tours.

Asenathi Jim brings precocious youthful talent, enthusiasm and flair to the 470 partnership. He is working extremely hard and with great dedication to convert his impressive youth results into senior level success.

Roger, Asenathi, Wadi, Marlon and I sincerely appreciated the many messages of encouragement and good wishes we received before and during the Worlds.

We would also like to thank Macs Shipping for bringing the Laser SB3s to Cape Town for the RaceAhead summer training program, Musto for their clothing sponsorship, Southern Ropes for providing new sheets and halyards for the RaceAhead SB3s and the SA Navy for allowing us to train so conveniently from the Naval Base in Simonstown."

David Hudson
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