



/ Mark Osmond



/ Travis Beaton



/ Jeremy Nevill



/ Isabelle Lloyd



/ Travis Beaton



/ Martin James



/ Travis Beaton



/ Colin Hart



/ Marley O'Toole & Charlie Lloyd

BOAT WAKE EUROS

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It was looking as if the season would be devoid of international boat wakeboard competitions. The IWWF World Championships due to be held in 2023 is still not scheduled. Then blue-green algae in the waterways of Belgium resulted in the Europe & Africa Championships being called off. But, at the last minute, Italy stepped in and the Euros were back on.

We had been pretty much packed and ready to go to Belgium when the government there pulled the plug and closed the country's waterways. The Euros were cancelled just five days before they were due to begin.

Less than two weeks later, however, the IWWF resurrected the competition. It was to be at Lake Poma in Sicily from 30 October - 4 November. Credit to the IWWF for rearranging a venue so

quickly but, at such short notice, we were able to muster only 5 riders from our squad of 25 to attend.

With each squad able to name 10 point scorers - with the top 8 scores from each country counting - we knew there was little chance of achieving a Team GB podium placing. And, with the hosts Italy being both the current World and Europe and Africa Champions, they would no doubt be able to field the largest team and be everyone's sure bet for the gold medal.

GB SQUAD

Our riders were Marley O'Toole, Isabelle Lloyd, Charlie Lloyd, Travis Beaton and Mark Osmond. We travelled to Sicily with Jeremy Nevill as Team Manager to do as best we could.

All our riders had represented Team GB in 2022. It would have been great to

bring some new squad members. All international competition experience benefits riders when they look to compete in future years but most of the squad already had other commitments. With Ross Phillips and Mark Goldsmith, the captains at the last two events, unable to attend, Travis Beaton was named Team Captain for the first time.

Despite our reduced squad and some difficult riding conditions, the Team performed well with four of the five making it all the way to the finals. Travis Beaton just missed out in the super-competitive Open Men division, going out in the semis. He was unlucky to fall after the ¾ buoy and was unable to finish his run. He was 5th in his semi and finished 9th overall. He did a sterling job in his first competition at Team Captain.

FINALS DAY RUNS

Mark (Over 50 Men) was first to ride for GB on finals day. As he was about to enter the course, the boat slowed and had to return to the dock to be reset. After a few minutes' delay he went out again and fell twice on a trick that he normally lands and he wasn't able to complete his first pass. He finished 6th.

Isabelle (U14 Girls), in difficult water conditions, had a good ride and went big but fell on her second trick. She went on to land her heelside backroll but fell on her toeside backroll. In a tough final she was unlucky and finished 6th by two points.

Marley (U14 Boys) was next and, having sized the wake out in his semi, went all out and started his run with a massive raley, then fell on a scarecrow which was just as big. He managed some more tricks before the corner.

As he came into the course for his second pass, conditions meant he had to edge out twice for his first trick - a wrapped KGB. Unfortunately, that meant he couldn't fit his skeezer in at the end of the pass. But that was good enough for 4th place.

Charlie (Junior Men) was in his first year stepping up to this category and, being one of the youngest, had a tough final to compete in. He also went big and rattled through his first pass tricks, even having time to throw in a fashion air as his fifth trick. In his second pass, all was going well. He landed a KGB, tootsie roll, switch scarecrow but then he fell on a cab 3. A stonking run, nevertheless, and Charlie also narrowly missed taking a podium spot by less than two points, finishing 4th.

As expected, Italy were the Team winners but Team GB had an amazing

week. At the outset, with our reduced squad, we would have been happy that all our riders made the semis or finals. In fact, their contribution also earned us a creditable 6th place.

CONGRATULATIONS TEAM! - THANK YOU

Big thank yous go to the IWWF, all the officials, the Italian Federation, Manfredi Frazzo Napoli and the wonderful team at La Baietta Wakeboard Club for putting the competition on so well at such short notice. A special mention goes to Martin James, the Chief Driver, returning to competition after a break of seven years.