

European Youth Rankings Ladder 2011 Analysis and Comments – Laszlo Matyas

The European Youth Rankings Ladder (EYRL) has been introduced in April 2010 for all three rigs, for the junior age categories in order to provide European youth Laser sailors a platform to measure their success in comparison with other European sailors and help them to see where they stand, and how they progress. The ranking calculation is administered by the ILCA office every quarter, and is directly comparable to the ISAF world rankings. More details can be found on the ILCA website. (<http://www.laserinternational.org/sites/default/files/Laser-Youth-Ranking-Ladder.pdf>)

The ladder gives a somehow more complete picture of the activity of young European Laser sailors than the Europa Cup Series, since a much wider variety of events are included from smaller club or district events, through to national championships, major international events (the Europa Cup regattas included), as well as European and World Championships – all with different weighting, of course. The 7 best results are accounted for (with appropriate weights) for the last 24 months (the results older than 12 months carry a lower weight).

Overall 76 regatta results reported by the European districts were taken in account. Table 1 demonstrates the activity (based on 18 months records: from April 2010 to October 2011). The first column shows the number of ranked sailors in the given age and gender categories: 1007 sailors altogether; whereas the second column, 'valid participants' shows the number of sailors who participated in at least one "ranking" regatta, whether or not they reached a "good-enough" result to be ranked: 1604 sailors altogether. The numbers in bold are the total, inclusive of the younger age categories. The last column indicates the total number of all participants, inclusive of sailors with missing ISAF number or DOB, and also the ranked sailors from last year who have since grown out of the given age category but still carry valid results from last year.

Table 1 **EYRL participation (April 2010 – October 2011)**

	<u>ranked</u>			<u>valid participants</u>			<i>total numbers*</i>
	U21	U19 (18)	U17(16)	U21	U19 (18)	U17(16)	
L4.7 boys		378	89		459	217	758
L4.7 girls		138	43		293	120	352
Radial boys		328	72		592	175	896
Radial girls	154	94	27	277	164	53	334
Standard	163	(46)		260	(91)		361
All 3 rigs:	1007			1604			2701

**total numbers include all the ranked and valid participants; plus the sailors who were within the age limit and thus ranked in 2010 but grew out of the age category by one year since; plus those with missing ISAF numbers or dates of birth, etc.*

These numbers are very impressive. It means, that around 1600 to 2700 young sailors are actively competing, at least on national or district level! The EYRL participations are comparable with the Europa Cup participations (see in separate analysis: 'Europa Cup Series in Numbers, 2011'), but it needs to be understood, that there is only partial overlap between the sailors who are included in either. On the one hand, the EYRL is more restricted, having an age limit and also it is only for European sailors; while there is a significant non-European participation in the Europa Cup series. On the other hand, the EYRL is more inclusive in another way, and captures young sailors who are still developing and may only compete at club or national level, not yet travelling to major international regattas, or sailors who only travel to continental or World Championships but not to other international events (typical for the GBR sailors, for example). While, on the other hand, the Europa Cup Series only include a dozen or so concrete international events. There is thus a significant subset of sailors who are not captured by the Europa Cup series but are active, and this is what we see in the EYRL.

The EYRL participation data also shows - and this can also been seen in the Europa Cup series - that the Laser4.7 is becoming a very dynamic rig, with very high participation and yearly rate of increase, practically becoming similar in numbers to the Radials (and likely to surpass it in the near future). Of course, we need to take into consideration that results are skewed because of the age bracket (which excludes most of the Standard sailors). In any case, the EYRL participation proves (along with the Europa Cup series analysis) that the Laser 4.7 is a dynamically developing rig, and this is a fact that must be taken into account in future event organizations, and quota allocations.

Last, but not least, the data also justifies a minor change in the EYRL age categories. Currently there are two age categories for the Laser 4.7 for each gender (U18 and U16), two age categories for the Radial boys (U19 and U17), and three age categories for the Radial girls (U21, U19 and U17), but only one (U21) for the Standards. The number in brackets in the table shows the current number of Standard U19 sailors, who would be ranked / who participated. *These numbers justify the U19 category to be included in the EYRL from 2012.* This would be logical as the other rigs also have age categories, and it would also mirror the Europa Cup age categorization.