



With Swiss champions and teams for the Olympics – Gstaad Yacht Club’s sailing summer is in full swing.

Nils Theuninck, Swiss Champion

Eighty-one Finn boats from seven nations fought from 23 – 26 June for the title of the International Swiss Championship on Lake Thun. The Finn newcomer and GYC member, Nils Theuninck convincingly won, ahead of the multiple Olympic participant Michael Maier from Czechoslovakia and Christoph Burger from the Thunersee Yacht Club.

Elite Swiss Finn sailors as well as many top sailors from abroad attended this Swiss Finn Championship. Due to the humid climate over the last weeks, as well the strong thunderstorms on the weekend, reaching the minimum of four countable regattas has been rather challenging. After three results on Friday (1st, 2nd, 3rd), one regatta on Saturday (another 1st) and no wind on Sunday, Nils Theuninck became Swiss Champion.

Olympic Trio of Teams

GYC members en route to the Olympics include the Nacra 17 team with Matías Bühler and Nathalie Brugger who qualified for Switzerland, the 470 sailor Will Ryan, who starts for Australia, and Billy Besson, who starts in the Nacra 17 class too, together with his crew for France.

Nathalie and Matías have now been pursuing their goal for eight years. Already in 2008, both were in Peking as well as 2012 in Weymouth on the Olympics’ starting line. In those years, they were each still in their own classes, but since 2013 have been united in a dual team.

Nathalie is a graduate in sport and kinesiological science, and is recognised as the most experienced and successful Swiss female Olympic sailor— she’s known as the most physical fit female in the Nacra17 circuit.

Matías is a talented sailor who started his sporting career at the age of 14 as Optimist Vice World Champion. The Argentinian-Swiss trained sail-maker came to Switzerland after the Olympics in 2008, where he trained the Swiss windsurfer Richard Stauffacher for the Olympics 2012 and since then aims for a medal himself in Rio together with Nathalie.

Will Ryan was first introduced to the waters of Sydney Harbour at just two days old. Growing up on the waters of Lake Macquarie - he progressed quickly through a range of junior classes including State and National Championships. Since 2009, Will has focused purely on the 470 class, with an Olympic medal firmly within his sights. Following the 2012 London Olympics, Olympic gold medalist Mat Belcher and Will teamed up to campaign towards Rio 2016, with the pair having immediate success winning the Worlds in 2013, 2014 and 2015. The connection to Gstaad came through Will’s family. His mother spent winters years at an international school here in Gstaad years ago. As a regular visitor in recent years, Will joined the GYC in December 2015

Billy Besson, a top French sailor, also joined the GYC in 2015. Together with Matthieu Vandame, he represented the GYC in the Littlecup 2015, as both of them were multiple world champions in various catamaran classes. With his teammate Marie Riou, Billy Besson became three-time world champion in the Olympic Nacra catamaran class; he is a training partner of Matías Bühler and Nathalie Brugger. Billy will represent France at the Olympics.

Currently all Olympic sailors are in the final training weeks in Rio. Sunday 24 July they will all come to Gstaad – at lunchtime in the GYC clubhouse, where members, guests and all sailing “aficionados” will give them a fond farewell before their participation in the Olympics from 5 August 2016 onwards.



GYC Nacra 17 Team Matías Bühler and Nathalie Brugger during the preparations in Rio



GYC member Nils Theuninck winning the International Swiss Finn Championship

