



## 2017 SAP 505 World Championship Preview

Severn Sailing Association was a flurry of activity on Wednesday evening as competitors prepared for the 2017 SAP 505 World Championship. Skippers and crews were busy performing last-minute adjustments to their boats, tuning the rig and working on other gear.

SSA members considerably cleared every other dinghy off the lot to accommodate the influx of 89 505s, which came from 12 different countries. Action got underway Thursday with the pre-worlds, which provide the sailors an opportunity to practice and study the venue.

Racing in the 2017 SAP 505 World Championship will be held Sunday through Friday on the Chesapeake Bay with organizers hoping to complete at least 10 races. Annapolis resident Sandy Grosvenor – a World Sailing and US Sailing International race officer, judge and umpire – is leading the on-water management along with a top-notch committee from co-host Eastport Yacht Club.

There are eight past 505 world champions in attendance and all rate among the pre-regatta favorites. Mike Martin and Adam Lowry are the defending champs after capturing their first title together last year in Weymouth, England. Martin, who previously won worlds in 2009 off San Francisco with Jeff Nelson, is considered a heavy air specialist.

So are Mike Holt and Carl Smit, who teamed to take the 2015 crown off Port Elizabeth, South Africa. Holt, a Santa Cruz Yacht Club member who garnered the 2014 championship along with Rob Woelfel, said conditions will determine a lot this year. Smit is an Annapolis resident so does bring some local knowledge to the table.

“We’ll have to see what the weather is going to do. It seems at the moment like it will be somewhat light and variable,” Holt said. “We’ll go out there over the next two days and see if we’re on the pace in those type of conditions.”

Heavy air does not seem likely for these worlds, which may expand the list of teams capable of being atop the podium at the end. Holt said there are too many talented sailors in the fleet to name all those that could contend.

“If we could dial up a forecast we would wish for 20 knots or more, but we probably won’t see those conditions this time,” Holt said. “It will not be a pure boat speed battle. This is a year in which you will need to keep your head out of the boat.”

That is a reference to the extremely shifty nature of the mid-Chesapeake Bay breeze, which can routinely change by as much as 40 degrees at times. Holt mentioned a pair of Chesapeake Bay entries – Tyler Moore and Rob Woelfel along with Chris Behm and Jesse Falsone – as having the local knowledge necessary to excel in light, shifty winds.

Moore has five North American championships to his credit while Woelfel has an incredible record of success as a crew. Moore, a resident of Hampton, Virginia, is an outstanding helmsman while Woelfel is a master tactician.

Behm and Falsone captured the 2016 505 East Coast Championship that was co-hosted by SSA and EYC last September. That is a positive indicator considering it was the same time of year and same courses. However, the tandem has not been able to practice much leading up to this world championship, missing the recent East Coast Championship due to commitments.

Falsone is serving as regatta chairman and thus has been consumed with myriad organizational duties. "You really can't organize a worlds and truly focus on sailing," said Falsone, somewhat downplaying his team's chances. "Chris and I just have not sailed as much as necessary to be in top form for an event that is this competitive."

No one would ever count out Howie Hamlin and Andy Zinn, who have teamed to capture three of the last four North American Championships. The Long Beach, California tandem secured the 2015 title off Annapolis, displaying versatility in a wide range of conditions.

"It's nice to sail on the East Coast and Annapolis is widely recognized as a renowned venue," Hamlin said. "We are hoping for variety with regard to wind range. We're probably not the fastest in any one condition, but can do well in light, medium and heavy. So all around is what we really need."

In analyzing the 2017 SAP 505 World Championship, class president Pip Pearson estimated that as many as 20 boats had the ability to win a race. Pearson listed nine very viable candidates, including the aforementioned Martin/Lowry, Holt/Smit and Hamlin/Zinn.

Also likely to be in the mix are Mike Quirk and Curtiss Hartmann, the six-time Australian national champions. Californians Ian Pinnell and Dave Shelton also have quite a track record of success separately with the former winning the 2008 world championship and the latter posting a pair of podium placements.

Pearson also mentioned Australia's Malcolm Higgins and Marcus Cooper, Britain's Andy Smith and Roger Gilbert and San Francisco-based stalwarts Ted Conrads and Brian Haines as teams that certainly could make some noise.



**SAP** 505 world  
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