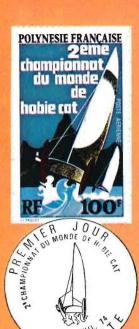




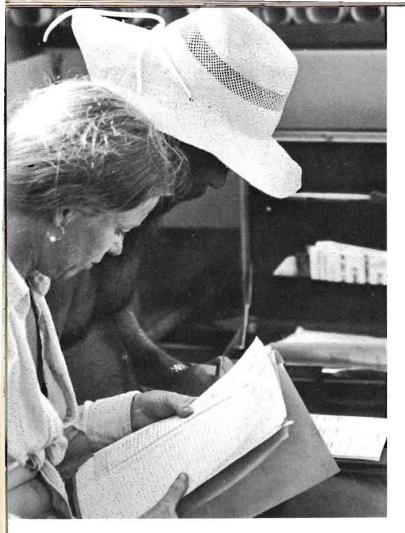
"The setting was Baie de Matavai, a large open inlet on the western coast of Tahiti. Sailors from six continents and twenty-one countries were present to participate in the 1974 Hobie World Championship.

The vast, aqua colored Matavai Bay with its jutting coastal cliffs and ribbon-like black sand beaches had seldom seen such internationality. Hobie skippers, enthusiasts and kin combined, the gathering numbered nearly four hundred strong. The French called it "2eme Championnat du Monde de Hobie Cat."



## ZEME CHAMPIONNAT DU MONDE DE HOBIE CAT





story and photos by Jake Grubb

It was a long plane ride. Seven hours, at least. Nevertheless, life in coach (Hobie people filled this whole sector) seemed to snap and crackle for a long while before settling into mass slumber. Believe me, stewardesses were kept dancing and giggling during the "lively" hours. We reached Tahiti, all—and I Mean EVERY OUNCE of beer was depleted from that plane, in addition to the greater bulk of other tickly liquids available to thirsty passengers.

At length, we descended and eventually met the airstrip in Papeete with an awakening "crrrumprump...." The long awaited visit had finally become reality. People were filled with groggy excitement. Walking from the air conditioned plane into a startling blast of humid, tropical air, it was like a crowd of dozy bears coming out of hibernation and regaining consciousness all at once. Time: 2:07 a.m. Skipper's meeting set for 9:30 a.m. on the black sand beach

below the Taharaa Hotel. "Huh?" How's THAT for general disorientation? Oh yes, and it's hello to the rigors of jet lag. One guy kept saying: "Hey wow—this is far out. I can dig it—boy, could I use some Z's." Good luck friend. We've got a welcoming party to keep us occupied.

It was nice though—really very, VERY nice. At the airport, the group was greeted by the sounds and laughter of friendly Tahitian singers and guitar players. Gordon Knight from Tahiticat (The Papeete Hobie dealer) was there with a couple of lovely hostesses to organize and reassure us that eventually, after singing and picture-taking and baggage transfer, we would be on our way to the Taharaa. Thirty minutes later we were weaving along a dark narrow road in a caravan of smoke-belching buses, bouncing and jouncing our way over the highways of paradise.

Arrival at the Taharaa Hotel revealed large, open buffets filled with fresh tropical fruits, juices and French breads. The atmosphere was a peculiar mixture of Tahitian informality and French sophistication. Indeed, visitors soon learned that this was a characteristic common to "civilized" sectors of French Polynesia; particularly Tahiti. Tomorrow we would awake to a whole new world.

The setting was Baie de Matavai, a large open inlet on the western coast of Tahiti. Sailors from six continents and twenty-one countries were present to participate in the 1974 Hobie World Championship. The vast, aqua colored Matavai Bay with its jutting coastal cliffs and ribbon-like black sand beaches had seldom seen such internationality. Hobie skippers, enthusiasts and kin combined, the gathering numbered nearly four hundred strong. The French called it; "2eme Championnat du Monde de Hobie Cat." To the Germans, it was; "Die Weltmeistershaft Von Hobie." To Americans it was the second "Hobie Worlds." But it was more than that-much more. It was communication among people of different languages; it was a modest bridging of cultures and creeds; it was a showplace of athletic effort and talent; it was a spirited hyacinth for Hobie-stoked people who work for their livelihood and sail for the love of

The regatta was well taken by the local people and by the government. Hospitality and support were sincere and consummate. Competition was to take place over a six day period, July 22nd to July 27th. Two of those days, July 22nd and 23rd, would be devoted to qualifying. The following four would consist of the championship. Of sixtyeight possible openings for World contestants, fifty-five were secured before the Tahiti event began. Sailors-both American and foreign-who had earned enough points within the national racing programs of their respective countries were pre-qualified. Sixty-six skippers from five countries fought for the remaining thirteen open spots during the two-day series of pre-championship races on Matavai bay. During both of those days, competition was fierce and conditions were demanding. Twenty-five to thirty knot winds prevailed and were fueled by forty knot gusts during periodic rain squalls. Racing was strenuous and skippers were worn out at the finish of each match. In the end, nine Americans, three Tahitians and one South African were able to fill the thirteen open positions. Fiftythree others went away fatigued and in some cases dejected. Midwestern Hobie 14 champion John Edd expressed his feelings this way: "Heavy weather made it damn difficult for me; the winds were so strong and shifty... And the swells were big. We just don't have that kind of stuff in the inland lakes where I come from." Edd tried hard but failed to qualify.

Of those who did make the cut, however, there were a handful that did so under apparent handicaps. Hawaii's Herb Andresen, an excellent Hobie 16 skipper, came to Tahiti on vacation to observe and to relax, Having had limited success in Hobie 14 competition because of his very large physical stature, (225 pounds at the helm of a 14 is fun but not highly competitive), he had elected not to enter. Contrary to his plans, an invitation from the race committee changed his mind and he decided to have a go. "I got here and I got the bug," he quipped. Andresen's superior strength and solid weight served him well in the qualifying. His 2-\%-\% brought him under the wire with a clear cut first place, over such aces as Robby Barrel, also from Hawaii, and Randy Hatfield from California. Another post-qualifier, eleven-year-old Phillippe, from Tahiti, carried with him his brother Francois as ballast. Together these two young French/Tahitian lads tipped the scales at little more than the basic minimum weight requirement and yet still racked up a handsome 6-7-4 for a sure spot in the championship competition. South African Derek Kershaw qualified with a skillful 4-6-2, despite the startling fact that he is permanently paralyzed from the waist down and must be carried to and from his boat. Asked of his hardship, Kershaw shared his attitude in these words: "I suppose if I allowed myself the luxury I might consider myself at a disadvantage. Since I am unable to use my legs I am limited in my ability to hike out on a beat. And, of course, in the event of a very fast jibe I cannot shift my weight so guickly. Often I elect not to follow the fleet for these very reasons. I go my own way. But we all meet up somewhere 'round the mark nearest the finish!"

Each day, from the Taharaa Hotel, high above the bay, if you rose early you could see the committee boat coming from Papeete. A vast ocean of blue was broken by the single white trail of a cruiser making its way toward Matavai. Later, other boats would follow. As the midmorning wind picked up and beach activity increased, more cruisers, small powerboats and regatta stake boats would speed toward Matavai under full throttle, slowing their pace as they neared the inner bay.

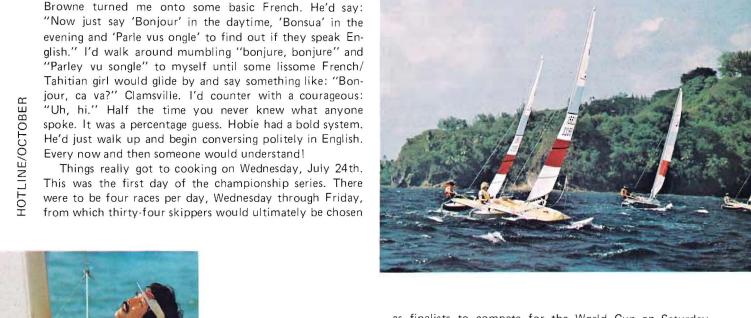
By 10:00 a.m. every morning, the surface of Matavai Bay would be pulsing with colorful Hobie catamarans. Sliding from the glissening black sand beach into calm Tahitian waters—one by one, one by two, two by three—Hobies of red, green, blue, white and gold would soon paint the bay. All bore pearly white mainsails, highlighted with the blue and red stripes of the French Polynesian flag. As the cats sailed—sometimes drifted toward open ocean, they would catch the shifting wind. And when they did, so, it was as if Neptune had attached invisible strings to their bridles and begun to pull with great force. The boats would take off in gusts of power and sail speedily out to sea. Once into the full breath of the wind, they would come about in smooth, broad arcs and then set south for one quarter mile, en route to the starting area.

From the beach you could see the cats in the distance—growing ever more distant. Their races were sometimes as much as ten miles in length and it was often over an hour from the time the boats disappeared around the first point to the time they made their way back into the bay, across the finish. It was during the races that congestion and pressure dimished in the beach area and people swam, sunbathed, generally enjoyed themselves and intermingled. The Tahitian girls with their high-pitched laughter, the French with their cheerful; "Bonjour," "Ca va—ca va bien," the Japanese with their humble manner and economic sips of bottled saki, the Brazilians with their brown eyes and provocative gestures: These were some highlights of the daily ambiance.





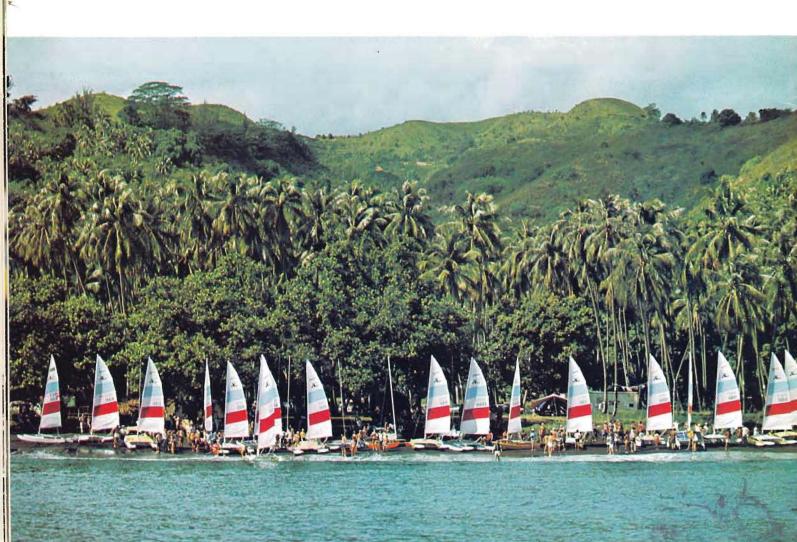
Communication was always a challenge. So many people spoke different languages-naturally. Film-maker Bud





as finalists to compete for the World Cup on Saturday. Each man would sail two races a day and be assigned a different boat for each race. Heats were arranged so that every skipper would compete against every other skipper at least twice. The object was to emphasize individual skill as the determinant in who would be judged the best.

Winds blew from eight to twenty knots during the four days of championship racing. Of six possible courses, four





hausen from Brazil. Canepa bested the rest of the group around A mark as they reached the buoy in a clump and then proceeded to open up a lead which he didn't relinquish. This gave him a very strong 4-%-%, equaling Loufek's front running %-4-%. The two super sailors ran like this right on into the finals.

It was the general concensus that Hobie Alter had come to Tahiti to do some racing and also some vacationing. He brought with him samples of his two latest creations, the new Hobie 10 and his prized radio-controlled sailplane, the Hobie Hawk. Speculation had it that Hobie would demonstrate the Hawk and the 10 to the international gathering, but the fact that he was entered in the competiton seemed



photo by Sandy Banks

were utilized. They were juggled from race to race. Given the overall layout of the course markers, the shortest course was 3.5 miles in length; the longest was ten miles. Each new race seemed to strengthen an impending aura of unpredictability. With winds flowing from high cliffs in a downdraft and shifting across the bay in a kind of "fan", different skippers seemed to find the "groove" in different races. Strategies were fascinating to observe. One on-going duel, for example, was between that of defending champion Richard Loufek and challenger Jeff Canpea. In the second race of the second day of competition, Canepa diced for first place with a group of sailors that consisted of Phil Berman from California, Jean Burgand from Tahiti, John Ross-Duggan from California and Manfred Von Schaaf-





to preclude this. "You really have to be on your toes to compete against a group like this," he confessed; "and to do that you have to be careful to maintain your concentration—especially at my age!" Each morning, Hobie could be found at the breakfast bar eating a spartan meal of fruit and eggs. After breakfast and morning salutations, he would take up his sailing gear and set out at a brisk gait for the high point north of the Taharaa where he could assess the winds and observe the course. He would then head for the beach to prepare for the demands of the day.

In his first race, Hobie led at the start, out-tacked the fleet to A mark and from there was never again contested for first place. He won handily. In each succeeding race, however, his problems seemed to increase and in the final analysis he was never able to match his initial performance. "It's pure stamina," said one young competitor; "that initial windward leg really takes it out of you. The guys



over forty who are able to hold the pace have gotta be supermen." Hobie usually SET the pace. Time after time the fleet would gather for the start with skippers jockeying for the best starting position. Hobie continually led the pack in the opening stages but seemed unable to sustain his advantage in the long beat to A mark. "There are a lot of variables to consider," emphasized Wayne Schafer; "the conditions are hard to figure and every skipper out there really knows what he's doing. It's tough competition."

A handful of young American sharpies seemed to be the most consistent high performers. Among them, Richard Loufek, Jeff Canepa, Randy Hatfield, Robby Barrel and Phil Berman were the most outstanding. And, coincidentally, each of them was no more than nineteen or twenty years of age—if that. Foreign notables included European champion and well known Finn competitor Jean Dorgambide from France, Japanese favorite Hiromitsu



Nakazawa, Jimmy Smith from Puerto Rico, Derek Kershaw from South Africa, Jan Kiaer from American Samoa, Jean Bondalatoff, representing New Caledonia, Australian favorite Geoff Hosley and James Buchanan from New Zealand. These were but a few.

Though it was initially Hobie's idea to hold the second Worlds in Tahiti, much of the carry-through was implemented by Tahiticat of Papeete. (Tahiticat, incidentally, recently sold Marlon Brando a Hobie 16.) Added assistance from the company's French licensee, Coast Catamaran of Hyeres, was also an important factor. Besides serving as French liaison, the Mediterranean-based Hyeres facility also supplied the boats which were used for the event. From what I could gather, you apparently don't just cheerily decide to hold a major regatta in French Polynesia and expect to pull it off without government intervention. "The red tape you wouldn't BELIEVE," said one haggard coordinator.

After much negotiation, French Polynesian officials not only agreed to go along with the event but put forth impressive efforts to support it. Posters advertising the "2eme Championnat du Monde de Hobie Cat" were hung in shops, markets, banks and boutiques. Military personnel, medical facilities and communications equipment were donated to officiate government support and, lastly, a com-



memorative Hobie stamp was issued through the French Polynesian postal service for both tourists and the native populous to incorporate into their daily use. In this small way, the Hobie World Championship became a significant means of international exchange.

IYRU rules were stringently enforced by the French race

committee. So much so, in fact, that if a foul were committed and ignored by the person fouled, the committee would take issue and file a protest. Hobie skippers were simply not used to this. Stake boats were stationed at each marker and seemed to see everything. Night after night, French committee members faced American committee members, coffee in hand and translator in the state of diplomatic frustration. "The French absolutely refused to be influenced," emphasized Coast Catamaran representative, Tom Long.

Skippers who protested on their own behalf were always given proper attention—but not always the kind they wanted. Rumor had it that there was one Japanese competitor who had a complaint. One problem: He spoke only Japanese and there was no Japanese interpreter. Laboriously he "addressed" the committee — in sign language, emphatic sounds and diagrams. . .problem solved!

Saturday's finals saw skippers exhausted even before they entered the transparent Tahitian waters for the last time. Canepa had already won the first of two final races and therefore needed only to go out and finish to secure his position as new champion. Yet the fourteeneth and final race was the longest and seemed to be the most fiercely fought. Hosley, Hatfield, Canepa, Barrel, Dorgambide, Schafer: All vied for the win but were unable to keep it from defending champion, Richard Loufek. Even so, Canepa finished in third place and sailed away with the title.

At an extravagant awards banquet held that evening, all sixty-eight competitors were honored and given miniature hand-made Tahitian outriggers as gifts of recognition for their individual performances. The thirty-four finalists were called one by one to receive their trophies, accompanied by two kisses (one for each cheek) from a beautiful Miss Tahiti. After all were addressed by Gordon Knight, followed by a speech from Monsieur Daniel Videau, Governor of French Polynesia, the new Hobie World Champion was formally announced and came before the banquet audience, accompanied by his mother and father, to receive the World Cup and Hobie Perpetual Trophy. Jeff Canepa was a happy man.

Amid the wine and dancing that carried into the night, many persons were wistful at the thought of departure. It was difficult to be enthusiastic about trading such coveted warmth and beauty for the synthetic veneer of a smoke-filled jet plane, much less the pressures and demands of a return to home and work and good 'ol metropolitan civility.

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## A SEQUEL

Some, nevertheless, awaited an added morsel of delight — one they had paid for and one that they now looked forward to with energy and GREAT APPETITE FOR ADVENTURE...

Twelve hours later, after a sweet night (and rude morning), after a massive and chaotic luggage transfer at the Taharaa, after many a reluctant payment of an oversized bar bill, after cries and goodbyes and the clicking of cameras, after a rumbly ride to Papeete on another quaint caravan of "le trucks" (Tahitian buses), we were ocean bound on a big weird boat — en route to an island called Moorea.

It was a thirteen mile cruise of pitch 'n roll. The boat was a big white rusty thing that kind of reminded you of something out of the shipyards over in Wilmington, California. I didn't get chummy with the crew, but I got the feeling that the boat stayed afloat from sheer extra-sensory will of the captain and that the coughing diesel engines continued to function only out of a masochistic devotion to their grease-bellied master.

As the boat neared the coast of Moorea, passengers on board seemed awe-struck by the island's beauty. Lush tropical landscape, waves of mighty force breaking in high plumes of spray onto out-lying coral reefs, blue and turquoise colored lagoons of such purity they seemed sacred. . . .

Entry into a deep crevasse along the leeward coast revealed a canyon-like inner bay. As the boat slowed, preparing to moor, what could be awaiting us at the dock but two exquisite Moorean....le trucks. Pile off the boat and prepare for another bus ride.

Everyone was "le trucked" to the Hotel Moorea Lagoon where the sunny afternoon was given to swimming and snorkeling. The evening followed in an outrageous festivity of food, music and dancing in which all visitors were consumed by a hoopla that wore long into the night. But le truck was never far away, and at a distant bewitching hour, we were taken away again — this time to our respective hotels.

Days of fun and free-wheeling followed, in which people toured, swam, paddled outrigger canoes, spent money, sunbathed, played volleyball, stalked the beautiful natives, and generally just did their thing. Hobie found a likely hill and was at last able to demonstrate his glider. Sandy and Carol Banks FINALLY got a chance to relax. Tom Long was able to satisfy his anthropological interests by mingling with the natives. Jeff Canepa partook in one of his many



robust interests — mountain climbing.
Jerry King showed the locals how to play sweathog volleyball.
Bob Beauchamp donned his duck-billed Coca Cola hat and doubled as a tree climbing island tour guide — complete with 4-speed Citroen to get you there. Richard Loufek studied French with Lovaian Rouleau, his French/Tahitian tutor.



photo by Sandy Banks



photo by Sandy Banks

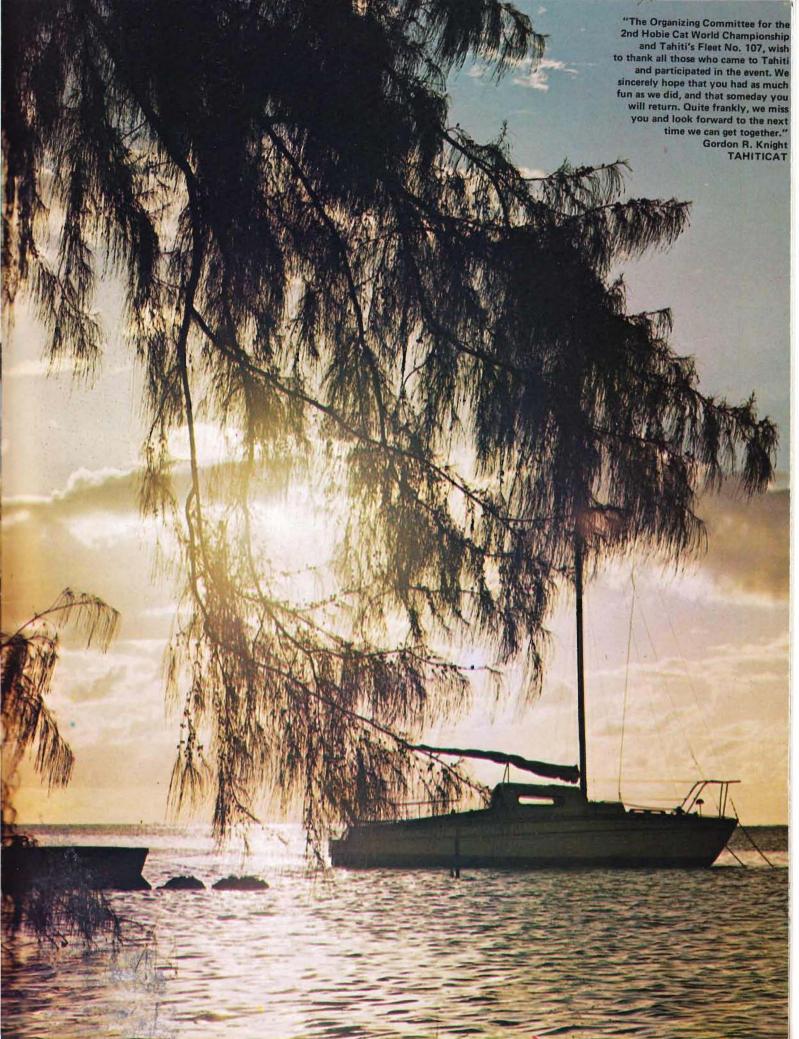
Ruth Triglia assumed the role of honorary Coast Catamaran diplomat to Moorea: "I won't go back, I'll just stay here."

As for what else went on... who am I to say? Mine are the limits of an unqualified observer...

photo by Sandy Banks



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## World Regatta Results PAPEETE, TAHITI

			FA	FEL	L, 1	AIIII					
POSI-											тота
TION	NAME	COUNTRY	1	2	3	4	5	6	. 7	8	POINT
1.	Canepa	United States	4	3/4	3/4	2	3	7-4	3/4	3	141/4
2.	Loufek	United States	3/4	4	3/4	12	3		9	3/4	221/4
3.	Berman	United States	7	DNF/32	2	12 3/4	14	7 8	2	6	38%
4.	Hatfield	United States	2	2	3	8	8	8	23 19 10	8	39
5.	Hosley	Australia	3	16	6	3/4	3/4	8	19	7	411/2
6.	Barrel	Hawaii	5	2	5	2	17	6	10	16	47
7.	Schafer	United States	10	9	7	<u>18</u> 5	3/4	2	15	10	53%
8.	Wilkie	Australia	3	11	24	5	17	5	4	9	.54
9.	Froome	Hawaii	5	8	4	9	6	13	11	13	56
0.	Ross-Duggan	United States	6	DSQ/11	4	8	11	14	5	11	56
1.	King	United States	2	14	14	15	10	4	28	2	61
2.	Dorgambide	France	8	12	12	11	9	20	14	4	70
3.	Staudt	United States	10	10	11	17	12	20 20	12	5	77
4.	Salmon, K.	Tahiti	12	9	26	19	18	3	7	12	80
5.	Wilcox	United States	15	3/4	DSQ/I5	3	27	9	20	18	80%
6.	Frey	Tahiti	19	3	18	6	16	3/4	<u>30</u> <u>27</u>	19	813/4
7.	Seaman	United States	7	6	8	12	14	17	27	22	85
8.	Delaunev	Hawaii	6	8	17	13	33	6	3	32	85
9.	Burgaud, J.	Tahiti	11	5	3	DNF/33	24	3/4	18	25	863/4
0.	Beauchamp, B.	United States	14	20	10	5	22	9	8	<u>26</u> 17	88
21.	Anderson	Hawaii	23	12	8	6	4	27	22	17	92
2.	Dinsdale	France	16	14	17	13	5	27 19 17	16	15	96
3.	Jones	Australia	9	13	12	4	21	17	21	28	97
4.	Hornsey	South Africa	11	17	13	7	16	12	26	21	97
5.	Beauchamp, D.	United States	13	19	20	15	2	15	24	14	98
6.	Wickanhauser	United States	20	7	11	16	15	13	31	20	102
7.	Alter	United States	3/4	2	22	14	25	10	DNF/32	29	102%
8.	Burgaud, A.	Tahiti	16	4	13	23	15	3	29	30	103
9.	Andreson	Hawaii	22	33	22	16	2	2	6	33	103
0.	Kunze	Brazil	30	7	DSQ/32	10	7	5	13	DNS/34	1 104
1.	Tamata	Tahiti	18	28	5	10	20	14	17	23	107
2.	Nakazawa	Japan	12	10	9	27	21	11	32	24	114
3.	Smith	Puerto Rico	4	23	27	3	14	18	25	27	114
				5		4	6			31	126
34.	Thompson	United States	27		24			DNF/29	DNS/34		
	POSI- TION NAME	COUN	TRY	1	2	3	4	5		POINTS	
	35. Salmon 36. De Ross 37. Von Sci 38. Golden	nay France haaffhausen Brazil United	States	9 25 29 25	15 19 21 22	10 2 7 26 16	25 28 22 14 17	11 9 7 4 19	31 18 16 10 26	70 73 73 75 76	

POSI- TION	NAME	COUNTRY	1	2	3	4	5		POINTS
35.	Salmon, D.	Tahiti	9	15	10	25	11	31	70
36.	De Rosnay	France	25	19	2	28	9	31 18	73
37.	Von Schaaffhausen	Brazil	29	21	7	28 22	7	16	73
38.	Golden	United States	25	22	<u>26</u> 16	14	4	10	75
39.	Nakagawa	Japan	18	6	16	17	19	26	76
40.	Sachet	Tahiti	14	22 17	18	9	12	DSQ/24	77
41.	Keough	Australia	17	17	32 27 15	7	13	27	81
42.	Koper	South Africa	20	16	27	24	5	19	84
43.	Peters	United States	28	. 18	15	11	8	23	85
44.	Lopez	United States	19	27	6	27	10	<u>29</u>	89
45.	Lippstreu	South Africa	13	26	30	19	23	11	92
46.	Van Der Venter	South Africa	24	25	14	24	19	16	97
47.	Backhausen	Germany	28 22	15	21	21	18	22	97
48.	Wood	Austraila	22	DNF/32	9	33 21	26	12	101
49.	Gross	United States	8	23	<u>28</u> 21	21	24	28	104
50.	Dowsett	Hawaii	26	21		25	32 26	15	108
51.	Harin	Tahiti	17	27	27	20	26	21	111
52.	Molter	Germany	21	24	19	29	30 30	22	115
53.	Kershaw	South Africa	23	18	23	28	30	23	115
54.	Bondaletoff	New Caledonia	30	26	DNF/32	18	20	21	115
55.	Ruhl	Brazil	31	32	19	20	25	25	120
56.	Joubert	South Africa	21	24	30 23	30	23	24	122
57.	Kiaer	American Samoa	33	13	23	32	32	29	127
58.	Eggink	Holland	26	29	33 15	26	22	25	128
59.	Huet	Belgium	32	25		29	28	<b>DNS/34</b>	
60.	Tomo.	Japan	31	28	16	34 22	28	26	129
61.	Philippe	Tahiti	29	31	20	22	30	34 28	132
62.	Buchanan	New Zealand	24	30	29	30	32		141
63.	Yazawa	Japan	34 27	20	31	31	27	32	141
64.	O'Grady Cabral	Brazil		30	29	26	DSQ/36	34	146
65.	Horii	Japan	32	29	31	231	23	34	148
66.	De Lemos	Puerto Rico	34	31	25	31	31	33	151
67.	Bolman	United States	15	DNS/34	DNS/34	DNS/34	DNS/34	DNS/34	
68.	Roche	France	33	34	34	32	DNF/32	DNF/29	161