

Sinpe Class In Poland

Kierskie lake is a small post-glacial lake located within the area of the city of Poznań in western Poland. In the sixties, seventies and eighties sailing reached its peak of popularity, therefore many famous Olympics competitors and sailors came from this region. At that time, there were twelve active sailing clubs located in Kiekrz – today, there are only six clubs involved in the competition.

In the sixties, Słonka was a very popular Polish sailing class. Many of the Polish champions came from the clubs located in Kiekrz. The boat was also suitable for training purposes like no other floating unit.

The hulls that time were made out of wood. At the same time, new constructions were becoming more and more popular – they were built from plywood and plastics; classes like Hornet, Cadet, Okdinghy, and later on the lighter constructions from laminates, so classes 420 and 470. Fewer and fewer competitors were interested in racing on this technically tricky and heavy-weight class. The boats were slowly vanishing from the club hangars. None of the Polish boat producers have not taken the production of SNIPE, based on the new technologies. The last Polish National Championship was held in 1967, and the winner was a junior (at that time) crew that consisted of Janusz Knasiecki and Bohdan Ratajczak. The break from organizing a Snipe Polish cup lasted as long as 34 years.

In 1998, Michał Koczorowski and Mirek Błoch were invited by their French friends to compete on SŁONKA in Le Hawr sailing race in France. For many of us it was a great surprise that this class was highly popular in other countries around the world.

The aforementioned Frenchmen, Jean and Metschild Romain gave the equipment to compete in the races for the two following years, free of charge. They also came up with the opportunity to lend two boats to compete in Poland, also for free, but with the option to purchase them later on. The good will and contribution of our French friends as well as the enthusiasm of Polish competitors resulted in the 2001 Polish Sailing Cup, for the first time since the long-time break from organizing this event. The presence of French team resulted in long-lasting international nature of this event. The winners were Mirosław and Jacek Błoch (the first president of this class). Moreover, the “old champions” had been also competing in this event, and year later, they came back to the leader position.

Mirek and Jacek Błoch, Bogdan Ratajczak, Zbyszek Rakocy along with their friends had thoroughly involved in organizing races, and they were also promoting this class among younger competitors. The great effort of this small group of enthusiasts was far from being fruitless, and it brought about a great interest. Every year this class attracted new competitors.

Poznań and Kierskie lake had become the center of SNIPE class in Poland, and even in Eastern Europe. Nowadays, there are about 30 boats from this class here, and many of which are still competing in this sailing class.

Polish SŁONKA competitors since the reactivation of this class are very active on the international scene. Our representatives compete in many prestigious championships of this class around the world. Because of the fantastic atmosphere, Polish competitors enjoy competing in Italy – in Caldonazzo, Molveno and also, The Belgium Cup that are annually held in Schrendijke. Still, Belgium, Italian, Japanese, German, French and Brazilian teams, often from the highest places in the world's leaderboards are coming back to Polish National Cup as well as The European Cup and Eastern European Cup, that has been recently organized in Poland.

One of the most important event for SNIPE class in Poland was The European Cup organized by Zbyszek Rakocy in 2014 in Kamień Pomorski.

For a few years by now, the Polish Junior Cup as well as Polish Masters Cup that is growing in popularity have been organized on the Kierskie Lake.

Highly efficient administration of the class under the leadership of the president Zbyszek Rakocy, Rafał Zakrzewski, Darek Sibilski, Mirosław Błoch, Sylwia Kędzierska Polaczyk and Jakub Kulesza organizes the life of SNIPE Poland. Zbyszek Rakocy currently holds the function of an international secretary of the SCIRA class. This year, Belgium and Italian sailors have already claimed to come back to compete in the European Cup organized in Poznań. The event is going to correspond to the international slogan of this class:

Serious Sailing – Serious Fun!

All our friends of SŁONKA class are more than welcome to compete in our great sailing race – The European SNIPE Cup.

The races will be held from July 20th to 22nd 2018 in the waters of Kierskie Lake in Poznań.

Author ; Filadelfia Bachorz, Ewa Kulesza .