



## **Barger speaks at Subway Celebrate Sailing Dinner for the USA JUNIOR OLYMPIC SAILING FESTIVAL**

July 3, Pensacola, Florida: **Ben Barger**, USA Olympic RS:X board sailor and six-time US National Champion, was on hand today to give the young sailors personal insights on international and Olympic competition. Barger is currently the 24<sup>th</sup> ranked RS:X board sailor in the world and the top ranked American.



Barger spent the morning at the Optimist Dinghy Green fleet clinics with the youngest sailors in the regatta. He worked



with Nicole Buechler, at one time the 6<sup>th</sup> ranked female Laser sailor in the USA, who is currently the Opti coach at Clearwater Community Sailing Center in Clearwater, Florida. She instructed the Laser and Optimist Dinghy sailors.

Barger, the featured speaker at the SUBWAY® *Celebrate Sailing* USA Junior Olympic Sailing Festival kick-off dinner Friday night, began sailing with his family at an early age. As a young man, Ben fell in love with the speed of boardsailing, thirty miles per hour PLUS.

He began competing more than fifteen years ago in local regattas, then moved into regional regattas including two Junior Olympic Sailing Festivals. He won the USA Junior Olympics in 1997 and 1998 which qualified him for the Youth Worlds in Japan and South Africa.

Ben, a six-time US boardsailing champion, is undefeated by an American since the 2003 National Olympic trials and has been on the medal podium at twice in Europe in 2007 and 2008.

In the US Olympic qualifying finals for the 2008 Olympics he defeated a four-time Olympian who had won had already won a bronze and a silver Olympic medal.



Clinics were also presented Friday afternoon by **Karl Kleinschrodt**, well-known sailing coach from Mobile, for the Flying Scot group.



Racing takes the spotlight on Saturday and Sunday with competition in nine racing classes: Opti Green, Red, White, and Blue fleets; Laser Full, Radial & 4.7 fleets; and Flying Scots.

By Friday afternoon there were a record seventy-nine young sailors registered to participate in the festival. Prizes, including the new SUBWAY *Celebrate Sailing* perpetual trophy awarded for the top performance in the largest fleet, will be awarded Sunday afternoon.

The SUBWAY® Junior Sailing Clinic, Ben Barger and Celebrate Sailing dinner program and the 8<sup>th</sup> annual USA Junior Olympic Sailing Festival on the Gulf Coast are presented for the first time this year by local SUBWAY® franchisees. Pensacola Yacht Club in Pensacola, Florida hosts the annual festival and regatta on July 3-5th.

Sailors 8-21 years old were invited to bring their Optis, Lasers, Club 420's and Flying Scots to join the fun at this traditional 4<sup>TH</sup> of July holiday regatta.

For results, photos or to learn more about the event, go to the PYC web site, <http://www.pensacolayachtclub.org/>, click GUEST then click on HERE below the Junior Olympic Sailing Festival event logo.

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## **About the 2009 USA Junior Olympic Sailing Festivals**

In its 13th season, the Junior Olympic Sailing program is a nationwide series of regattas for youth, ages 8 to 21. There are 25 regattas slated for 2009 in the continental United States and Hawaii and over 4,300 sailors are expected to participate. The action begins with two events in June, and the series culminates with the 33rd annual Orange Bowl International Youth Regatta in Miami, the largest junior sailing event in the country.

This youth development program, nationally sponsored by West Marine, Gill North America, Active.com and Bull Frog, is a nationwide series of regattas hosted by yacht clubs and sailing organizations. They are designed to promote the enjoyment of sailing, develop the skills of young sailors, and to provide a pathway for hopeful Olympic competitors.

During the course of the 2009 JO season, young sailors will race Optimists, Lasers, Bytes, Sunfish, El Toros, Club 420s, CFJs, 29ers, windsurfers and more in 25 events held in 16 states. Since the inception of the program in 1997, more than 38,000 sailors have participated in 233 events offering various levels of competition, skill building and fun activities designed to encourage a life-long involvement in the sport of sailing.

Additionally, US SAILING's JO program has inspired hundreds of young sailors to reach for their Olympic dreams. The medal ceremony at the end of each JO event is similar to that of the Olympic Games format, as class winners step up to the podium to collect gold, silver, and bronze Junior Olympic medals. Special fun prizes and sportsmanship awards are presented at many JO events.