Od: **Marceli Mierzwicki** mierzw.marceli@gmail.com
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Komu: Novotný Štěpán novotny@sailing.cz
Kopie: Petr Pelnář terence.hill161@gmail.com, Kristian Bezusek kristian.bezusek@gmail.com

49erFX Training Report – Gdynia, August–September 2026

1. Training Overview

The training programme in Gdynia consisted as of now of two main blocks. The first took place in August and focused on returning to the 49er after a long break, setting up the equipment and rebuilding the basic technical foundations. The second block took place in September during the Polish Open Championships, where the training environment developed into a high-level competitive event with some of the strongest Polish and international crews.

The main objectives throughout both blocks were to build boat-handling skills, improve communication between the athletes, develop speed and establish a solid foundation for further progression towards high-performance skiff sailing.

2. August Training Camp – Technical Foundations

The first training camp was primarily focused on equipment preparation and adapting the boat to the athletes. The crew was still using older-style sails, which created certain limitations in terms of trim and versatility. As this was their first training block after a substantial break from sailing the 49er, the priority was not immediate performance but building confidence and consistency.

The training focused mainly on:

- Boat handling and manoeuvres.
- Communication and coordination between the two sailors.
- Sail trim and understanding the boat's response.
- Developing consistent routines and more efficient information exchange.
- Building familiarity with the speed and physical demands of the 49er.

With only one crew to work with, communication received particular attention. The objective was to establish a system in which information is delivered clearly, at the right moment and in a way that supports decision-making rather than creating unnecessary noise. Both sailors need to understand not only their individual tasks but also how their actions influence the other person and the overall performance of the boat.

Most of the training was conducted in medium wind. Unfortunately, there were no proper strong-wind sessions during this first block. With the existing equipment setup, the crew was also relatively specialised towards stronger conditions and lacked the versatility that a modern, well-adjusted 49er setup should provide.

The athletes also had one day of practice racing against a leading Austrian women's crew. This was particularly useful for experiencing higher boat speeds, shorter decision-making windows and the intensity of sailing against more experienced competitors.

Overall, the first camp was productive. It provided a necessary technical reset and allowed the crew to establish initial communication routines without putting excessive emphasis on results.

3. September Training Camp and Polish Open Championships

The second training block took place during the Polish Open Championships. What was initially expected to be a relatively relaxed, family-friendly regatta turned into a very strong competitive event, attracting almost the entire Polish junior fleet, as well as several senior and international crews with World Championship / Junior titles and medals in the 49erFX class.

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This created an exceptionally strong sparring environment. Piotr and Krystian were competing against several crews with significantly more experience, including world-level athletes. This was an important opportunity to assess their current level and identify the areas that need further development.

Strong-wind performance

The crew performed particularly well in strong wind. They were regularly among the leading boats, reaching fifth place at the first windward mark in a fleet of twelve.

Their speed was competitive, and they were able to stay close to some of the strongest crews in the fleet. The main difference was not a fundamental lack of speed, but rather technical precision, boat stability and more refined sail trim. The leading Polish crews and the Danish athletes were able to maintain better control and extract more consistent performance from their boats.

As the wind increased further, the crew continued to perform well, reaching fourth or fifth place at the first mark. Unfortunately, they capsized at a gate rounding. During the recovery, one of the long shrouds came loose and required repair. The sea state and wind conditions deteriorated significantly, making it difficult to continue safely. The crew therefore had to retire from the final two races.

Despite this, the strong-wind performance was one of the most encouraging aspects of the entire training cycle. The athletes showed that they have the physical capacity, motivation and speed potential to compete in demanding conditions.

They also clearly enjoyed sailing in strong wind. This is an important factor for their development, as confidence and enthusiasm in challenging conditions provide a good foundation for future progression.

Final series

Piotr and Krystian qualified for the final series of the Polish Open Championships.

In the first final race, sailed in very light wind, they reached the first windward mark in first place. This was a particularly positive result, especially considering the strength of the fleet and their limited experience in the class.

However, their performance in light wind remains a clear limitation. Against lighter female crews, particularly senior athletes, they struggle to maintain the same downwind speed and acceleration. Their greater combined weight makes it difficult to sail deep and fast in very light conditions. When they bear away, the boat loses speed, while lighter crews are able to maintain momentum and sail around them.

In the following race, a weaker start left them further back in the fleet. They eventually finished around tenth or eleventh, which was a reasonable result in such a competitive field.

The regatta therefore confirmed two different aspects of their current performance: they have significant potential in stronger conditions, while light-wind performance, especially downwind, requires further work and is partly influenced by their current physical profile relative to the competition.

4. Technical and Performance Assessment

Boat handling and manoeuvres

The first training block was dedicated to rebuilding basic boat-handling skills after a long break. Considerable progress was made in manoeuvres and coordination. The subsequent strong-wind sessions provided an opportunity to test these skills under more demanding conditions.

The crew still needs more experience and confidence in survival conditions, particularly when performing manoeuvres in large waves and strong wind. The September sessions were valuable in this respect, and additional drills helped establish a stronger foundation.

Communication

Communication has been one of the main priorities throughout the training cycle. With only one crew, there is a strong opportunity to establish efficient routines and build a shared understanding of priorities.

The objective is to ensure that both sailors exchange relevant information at the right time, anticipate each other's actions and make decisions together without unnecessary communication.

This foundation will become increasingly important as the crew moves into more complex racing environments

This foundation will become increasingly important as the crew moves into more complex racing environments, where decision-making speed and coordination are essential.

Speed and sail trim

The existing equipment during the August camp limited the crew's ability to develop a versatile trim approach. Their old-style sails and initial setup were not ideal for extracting consistent performance across a wide range of conditions.

Despite this, the September racing showed that they already have competitive speed in strong wind. Their performance against experienced international and Polish crews was encouraging.

The next step is to refine the setup and develop a more detailed understanding of sail trim, boat stability and acceleration. This will be particularly important with the new mast and sails, which should remove some of the equipment-related limitations.

Physical and tactical profile

The crew has demonstrated a strong physical profile for sailing in heavy conditions. Their size and strength are advantages when the wind increases, allowing them to handle the boat effectively and compete against experienced crews.

In lighter conditions, however, their weight becomes a disadvantage, especially downwind. This is an area that requires further technical development, including acceleration, trim and more precise mode control.

From a tactical perspective, the current training cycle has focused more on technical foundations and communication than on advanced racing strategy. Further exposure to high-level sparring and racing will be necessary to evaluate their tactical consistency and decision-making under pressure.

5. Next Training Block – Preparation for Vilamoura

The final Gdynia training block will focus on preparing the crew for Vilamoura. With a new mast and new sails, the objective is to establish a reliable equipment setup and make sure that the athletes are no longer limited by their current equipment.

The planned training will include:

- Detailed sail trim and speed testing.
- Continued work on boat handling and manoeuvres.
- Building stronger communication routines.
- Developing speed and confidence in strong wind.
- Training alongside the Estonian and Czech crews to create a competitive sparring environment.

The Estonian and Czech teams should provide valuable training partners, allowing Piotr and Krystian to compare their speed and technical execution against strong international competition.

The main objective is to arrive in Vilamoura with a solid technical foundation, reliable communication and sufficient confidence to compete independently in strong wind.

6. Recommendation and Future Development

The two Gdynia training blocks have shown to me that Petr and Kristian have significant potential for further development in high-performance skiff sailing.

Despite a relatively short period of training together in the 49er, they have already demonstrated competitive speed in strong wind, the ability to perform against experienced international crews and a strong motivation to improve. Their fifth-place positions at the first mark in a competitive fleet, together with their first-place position in the light-wind final race, indicate that they can already produce promising performances across different conditions.

Their current limitations are identifiable and can be addressed through a structured training programme. The most important areas are technical precision, communication, light-wind performance, survival skills and gaining experience in high-level racing environments.

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I'd recommend integrating Petr and Kristian into the VSCM support programme to help them progress steadily. Coaching and regular sparring opportunities against international crews would provide the conditions necessary to accelerate their development.

The next important assessment point for us will be the upcoming Vilamoura training and racing block on European Junior Championship. Based on their performance there, we should evaluate whether they are ready to transition towards the full-size 49er and what their next development pathway should look like.

At this stage, I see considerable potential in both athletes. Their progress so far justifies further investment in their development, and I believe they should be given the opportunity to continue progressing within a structured high-performance environment, but for know we plan to be pushing forward regardless.

Regards,

Marceli