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Hamish Pepper & Carl Williams Take NZ's First Gold Star in the Wells Fargo Private Bank Star World Championships 2006

October 6, 2006 - San Francisco, California – In a classic nail biting finish where one small wave would have made a difference to the points standing between those fighting to take home a gold star today, New Zealand won its first Star World Championship. The trophy went to skipper Hamish Pepper and crew Carl Williams, with 19 points on the board. Racing got underway just after noon in cold, gray and cloudy conditions, with the breeze a steady westerly of 10-12, with occasional puffs to 15 knots.

Peter Szasz, St Francis Yacht Club Regatta Chairman, commented, “We’re thrilled to congratulate Hamish and Carl on their victory today. It’s been an extremely demanding week on the water and our accolades go out to every competitor.”

Peter continued, “With the 2008 Olympics just around the corner, this has been one of the most exciting events ever hosted by the St. Francis Yacht Club. With the unusual weather delivered to us this week, the Berkeley Olympic Circle proved it’s worth as a world-class course location, providing demanding conditions that have kept this international fleet of sailors focused and challenged throughout this 6-day series. We know that this is an excellent sailing venue to host a future summer Olympics event.”

Brazilians Robert Scheidt and Bruno took second place (22 points), while defending champions Xavier Rohart and Pascal Rambeau (FRA), took third place (23 points), Andy Horton and Brad Nichol (USA), took fourth (30 points), and Fredrik Loof and Ander Ekstrom (SWE), took fifth place (40 points).

For a country that hasn’t won a world championship in an Olympic class since 2002, today’s win was a huge victory for New Zealand. Dockside at the St Francis Yacht Club, the Blue Angels buzzing the club overhead with ceremonious good timing, an ecstatic Pepper said, “We’re absolutely excited, it’s fantastic! It’s been our week and we’re fortunate that it’s the world champs. They are great boats – an old design that have come through the years well and are challenging to sail. The people involved in the fleet are fantastic to be with and it’s a great atmosphere.”

Pepper is a relative newcomer to this fleet deep in talent and has only been sailing the Star since January. Williams has had a grand total of 35 days in the class but with Australian David Giles coaching the team they’ve come a long way in a short time.

The other Kiwi team Rohan Lord and Addy Miles, also relatively new to the class, performed tremendously taking 6th place overall in the 66-strong highly qualified fleet.

The venerable Mark Reynolds, two-time Olympic gold medalist in the Star, and competitor of well over 20 Star World Championship events, had a somewhat different ending to the regatta as his crew Hal Haenel left at 4am to join his wife who gave birth to a 9lb baby boy this morning. Stepping in for Haenel today was Magnus Liljedahal, with whom Reynolds won the Olympic gold in 2000.

“We were doing great this morning, crossing tacks with Iain Percy at the top of the fleet when three quarters of the way up the first beat we broke our headstay and so were done for the day. We were looking forward to a top 10 finish but you win some and lose some, that’s why we sail so many of these! Like other Olympic sports it’s getting tougher and tougher to do well in this fleet but we’ve been lucky with the Star in that we have talented people coming in from other classes – the Finn, the Laser, the 49’er – and they are all champions in those classes so the depth just keeps on going.”

For St Francis Yacht Club members Steve Gould and Greg Sieck, this wasn’t the week where local knowledge paid off on the race course. Commented Sieck, “We had fun up but our performance has been up and down as it’s been tough, not the usual San Francisco conditions. We’ve been at this a long time, our boat’s wonderful but we don’t have a full program. We did make the first mark in first position on the first day which was great, we improved daily with today being our best. It was fantastic to be close to home and the club did a great job.”

CUMULATIVE STANDINGS

Place	Skipper	Crew	Country
1	Hamish Pepper	Carl Williams	New Zealand
2	Robert Scheidt	Bruno Prada	Brazil
3	Xavier Rohart	Pascal Rambeau	France
4	Andy Horton	Brad Nichol	USA
5	Fredrik Loof	Anders Ekstrom	Sweden

(For full results visit www.stfyc.com, click on Regatta Information and Star Worlds)

About Wells Fargo

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About the St. Francis Yacht Club

Founded in 1927, the St. Francis Yacht Club is steeped in over 75 years of yachting and racing traditions. From the start, the St. Francis Yacht Club's membership roster has included many of the Bay Area's most prominent citizens and greatest sailors. Early racers for the St. Francis included such champions as L.A. Norris, Mark Fontana, Myron Spaulding, Arthur Rousseau,

Painless Parker and Lester Stone. Today, it is names like Paul Cayard, John Kostecki, John Bertrand, Stan Honey, Morgan Larson, and Russ Silvestri who continue to keep the St. Francis name in the forefront of world-class sailing. The annual regatta schedule at the St. Francis is one of the most aggressive regatta calendars in the world. Part of the attraction of racing at St. Francis Yacht Club is the excellent and challenging racing conditions unique to San Francisco Bay. With the skyline of San Francisco and the Golden Gate Bridge as a backdrop, the St. Francis Yacht Club prides itself on being able to provide all visitors with every comfort and amenity while dazzling them with their surroundings.

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