

From Strong Wind Warning to Champagne Sailing: Maximum Suspense at the SAILING Champions League Qualifier on Lake Starnberg

Starnberg, May 17, 2026 - *The 13th season of the SAILING Champions League (SCL) kicked off this weekend with top-class sailing on Lake Starnberg. 17 top international teams from ten nations engaged in an intense head-to-head battle for the five coveted tickets to the final in Kiel. In an extremely tightly packed field, where sporting consistency and tactical finesse decided every point, Kongelig Norsk Seilforening (KNS) ultimately prevailed, crowning an outstanding team performance with the overall victory.*

Extreme competitive depth and a thriller right to the end

As proven in the SCL format, the short races on identical J/70s ensured an absolute level playing field. The focus was solely on tactics and flawless teamwork on the boat. The enormously high sporting level of the international fleet meant that even the smallest mistake on the short courses was immediately and severely punished.

Variable conditions and heavily shifting winds challenged the clubs

The variable conditions demanded maximum flexibility from the clubs. Initially, extremely shifting and unpredictable light winds turned the fight for positions into a veritable "game of dice." On Saturday, Lake Starnberg showed its other face: For Bavarian standards, the wind blew so strongly that the orange lights of the strong wind warning flashed around the lake.

Sunday finally made up for it with a dream final: "Champagne sailing" in bright sunshine and perfect, steady winds until the breeze collapsed at noon. To make the most of these top conditions and guarantee the teams maximum time on the water, the Organizing Authority made the decision to cancel the "Final Four," which is otherwise customary in the SCL Series. Instead, all clubs sailed the regular format through to the very end.

A total of 13 flights were started. However, since only the first race could be completed in the 13th flight before the wind finally collapsed entirely in the late afternoon, average points had to be awarded for the remaining two outstanding races. In this truly exciting event, the following five teams kept the strongest nerves and qualified for the SCL Final in Kiel this October:

- Kongelig Norsk Seilforening (Norway)
- Mühlenberger Segel-Club (Germany)
- Bayerischer Yacht-Club / Team BMW (Germany)
- HRM Racing (Poland)
- Segelclub Stäfa (Switzerland)



"Lake Starnberg can be challenging and it proved that impressively this weekend with its true weather roulette! But exactly that is the DNA of the SAILING Champions League: Whoever comes out on top after this wild mix of a Bavarian strong wind warning and the finest champagne sailing has more than earned their ticket for the World Final. A huge thank you to the Bayerischer Yacht-Club, who delivered an absolute masterclass as hosts on land and on the water during their SCL premiere." - Anke Nowak, Managing Director SAILING Champions League

Follow all the action live: sailing-championsleague.com

About the SAILING Champions League: <https://sailing-championsleague.com/about/>

Pictures per club/country:

<https://konzeptwerft.smugmug.com/SAILINGChampionsLeague/2026/Qualifier-BYC-/PRESS-c-SAILING-ENERGY> (Credit: SAILING Champions League / Sailing Energy)

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