



## **PRESS RELEASE: 5.10.2024 Results Eurocup 4 STAR Event Final**

### **Junior World Champion and local hero Danylo Kleshchar finishes second in the open class of the European Cup Final.**

On German Unity Day, „Tag der Deutschen Einheit“ 2024, the qualifications for the Cable Wakeboard European Cup Finals began at the Hot Sport Seepark. The finals for wakeboarders and wakeskaters were held on Friday afternoon and Saturday midday.

The event kicked off with wakeskating, which is essentially skateboarding on water. Wakeskaters ride only on a small wooden board, wearing skater shoes like on land, and can perform tricks that look similar to those on skateboards and even share some names.

In the women's division, Victoria Vander Veken from Belgium was the top performer in the qualifications but was beaten in the finals by freshly-crowned German Vice-World Champion Kyra Hartan just winning gold in Paris. The 16-year-old Kyra trains at the wakeboarding facility in Neubrandenburg and impressed the judges with tricks like the Frontside Shove-It and a 540 on the rail.

In the men's division, current Vice-European Champion and military athlete Max Keller competed and triumphed with an outstanding score of 89.32 points, ahead of Philippe Fabien Sperber and Stefan Pröll. Max Keller hails from the Allgäu region and rides at the wakeboard facility in Blaichach. He secured victory with his first run and thrilled the spectators with a clean Kickflip in his second run.

In the over-30s division, local hero Felix Schneider, who has been wakeboarding since 2007, took part. Besides being the head coach of the German national team, Felix also commentated the event with the microphone. While he was performing on the water, the cable car operator Lucien Gerkau took over the microphone and witnessed Felix winning first place with 80.67 points, securing a 3-liter Benediktiner beer glass as a prize with a free fill in the Beachbar.

On the evening of German Unity Day, the Seepark Restaurant hosted the "Riders Dinner" in its newly opened event space, offering a beautiful setting with the best view of the lake. Drinks were provided by Coca-Cola, Bitburger Fassbrause, and the beverage distributor Trinkkontor. Champagne for the winners were provided by Scavi & Ray.

In the junior girls' under-18 category, Nike Hauser from Dock 5 in Düren secured first place. Laura Bertram from Friedberg in Bavaria Germany finished second. Nike impressed the judges with tricks like the Mobe (Backroll 360), which are typically seen in world championship finals. Viktoria Vander Veken from Belgium finished third.

In the junior boys' under-18 category, Luke Otten from Blaue Lagune in Wachtendonk finished third. The battle for first place was closely contested between Maximilian Gerding and Philippe Fabien Sperber. The 15-year-old from Ruhlsdorf led after the first run and calmly watched his competition in the second run. He then witnessed Maximilian Gerding surpass him with an outstanding run, featuring difficult tricks like the 90210 and a 900 over the kicker. Sperber attempted to come back in his second run, but after a long deliberation, the international judging panel awarded Gerding the victory by less than a point. The experienced judges, who came from Spain, Italy, and the Netherlands, joined the German judging team. Experienced riders like Emely Jones (GER) and Marco Gacic (SER) participated as both judges and riders, sharing their expertise directly.

The event was organized by the local sports club ADW Marburg-Niederweimar and Hot Sport Seepark. Vanessa Weinbauer, world champion and head of the local organizing committee, prepared the event over month of meticulous planning, resulting in a highly successful event.

In the women's top category, a tough showdown unfolded between wakeboarders from Germany, Israel, and Poland. Three of the riders are currently vying for qualification to the World Games. Germany's Emely Jones, Israel's Elizaveta Pruzhanskaia (known as Lisa Baloo), and Poland's Julia Lupij are fighting for spots, as only the top three in the world rankings qualify for the 2025 World Games in Chengdu, China. Local rider Marina Buchholz from Marburg finished fourth, risking everything with the difficult Blind Judge trick. Emely Jones, a national team rider from Beachclub Nethen, faced mounting pressure after her first run. She took big risks but crashed early. In the second run, she played it safer to secure a podium finish, earning the bronze medal. Freshly elected international athlete representative Elisaveta "Lisa Baloo" led after the first run with 57 points, ahead of Julia Lupij with 54 points. Julia had to perform her second run first, as the top qualifier gets to go last in the final. She put together a flawless run with fantastic tricks, scoring 59.67 points to take the lead. Lisa then had to risk everything in her second run but only managed to improve by 1.33 points, remaining in second place.

The final event was the men's open pro class. From the qualifications, it was clear that an epic battle was brewing between the two newly crowned Vice-World Champions from Paris: Florian Weiherer from Munich and Danylo Kleshchar from Ukraine. Born in 2008, junior Danylo has been living and training in Marburg for over a year and attends school in Niederwalgern. He left his home wakeboarding facility in Kyiv with his family after the outbreak of the war. Meanwhile, the 24-year-old open men's Vice-World Champion Florian Weiherer trains at the wakeboard facility in Aschheim near Munich and has been wakeboarding since 2011. Danylo won the qualifications with a brilliant run, finishing with a 900 over the kicker. Florian, however, fell in his first run and could not risk everything in his second run to secure a strong starting position for the final. In the final, Florian went first but lost his handle on the kicker in his last trick, leaving his run incomplete. Danylo, in his first final run, put everything on the line but crashed midway through his run. The judges allowed him a rerun, but unfortunately, his Mobe5 trick went wrong, and he couldn't grab the handle during the handle pass. Florian then played it smart, securing the lead with a solid run. Danylo risked everything again in his second run, overtaking Florian, but he couldn't repeat the high-difficulty tricks from the qualifications and finished just with a 720 over the Kicker. Florian, with his experience and consistency, managed to surpass Danylo with the last run of the day to win the European Cup Final. Croatian judge and rider Marco Gacic finished third, and Serbian rider Luca Ilic came in fourth.

The event concluded under beautiful sunshine with an awards ceremony in the arena of the Seepark. In addition to 3-liter Benediktiner beer glasses and €2,800 in prize money, there were many prizes to be won. The water ski and wakeboard cable system manufacturer Rixen provided cool skateboards for the wakeskaters, along with t-shirts and keychains. Unit and Shape, the makers of the floating fun park's kickers and ramps, gave away t-shirts, hats, and caps to the winners. Wakeboard manufacturer Goodboards supported the event with t-shirts, jackets, and a longboard. O'Neill contributed neoprene impact vests for the award ceremony. The event was also financially supported by Estador Immobilien, the Sparkasse, Goodboards, OnWater Boat Schools, Family Dentist, Stefan Raßner, Elektro Kahle, Dilling Baugesellschaft, Salitos, Scavi and Ray, Coca-Cola, and the district of Marburg-Biedenkopf. Along with the medals, laser-engraved wooden plaques from Werkstattlärm were awarded.

The event was made possible not only by the sponsors but also by over 50 volunteers, coordinated by Vanessa Weinbauer, who contributed to the event's success in countless ways. They provided food for the helpers, took care of registration, office and press work, photography, and designing posters. Hot

Sport Sportschulen Seepark supplied the technical equipment, which was set up and dismantled by club members. Volunteer lifeguards, doctors, and first responders ensured safety on land and in the water. In addition to free beverages, the athletes were provided with physiotherapy, mental training, and ice-bathing workshops. The international judging team was supported by national helpers at the start, in controlling the fun park, and on the microphone. Even the music selection on site was arranged by volunteer DJs. During the evening Riders Party, Perla Nera provided the perfect mood with beautiful house music from the DJ booth.

On Sunday, the weekend concludes with the finals of the local „Hessische Meisterschaft“ and the awards ceremony at 5 p.m. The water ski and wakeboard facility will continue to operate every weekend, with the season ending with the Nikolaus ride on December 1st. Season 2025 in Marburg will start 1st of March. Planning for the next season will begin during the winter, with the highlight being the Cable Wakeboard events at the World Games in China. Whether the Seepark will host another international event next year depends largely on volunteer support and financial backing from sponsors. Vanessa Weinbauer hopes to offer a training camp for the girls and women of the German national team, as well as a youth camp. The World Games will take place in Karlsruhe in 2029, and Hot Sport Seepark aims to continue supporting the sport with competitions and athlete development in the future.

Kind regards,  
Vanessa Weinbauer and Lucien Gerkau

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