

Great turnout for club Laser Championships

Contributed by Fiona Tylecote
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It was light winds for the sailors who turned out for the Rutland Club Laser Championships this Sunday. The high winds and gales which had been promised all week failed to materialise but there was good tight racing nevertheless. With some of the club's top sailors there it was close racing throughout. The first start saw a strong port bias and a few over keen sailors found themselves a little too close as the gun went. Richard Pratt got away and led the fleet for most of the race but in the final minutes it was Dave Allsop who showed a bit of match racing prowess sailing Richard on to ensure he would lead back to the finish. The beauty of a dedicated race officer was that the second start got underway almost immediately. Richard and John Williams jostled for position throughout but it was John who pulled through to pip Richard for the second time that day. Further back Paul Linford and Karen Wilkins pulled off a great mark blocking manoeuvre which guaranteed Mark Haslam a third. David Wilkins had to sail around the barrier which cost him a large amount of time. Fiona Tylecote was seen tacking off and reaching back and forwards until a gap appeared.

For the third race the wind had swung to the left just as the fleet left the shore. This meant the race was skewed with most of the beat on port. At the windward mark Fiona Tylecote was in a good position but a poor manoeuvre saw her infringe Mark and have to do a penalty turn. Simon Morley & almost a Laser stalwart led the race and took line honours. In the last race it was Paul Linford who took his turn in winning. Then it was all ashore for the get together and nibbles in the training room courtesy of David and Gill Wilkins.

The prizegiving saw John Willaims taking away a great deal of glassware winning both the scratch and personal handicap event. The personal handicaps allow those less skilled sailors to compete against the better sailors. To win you need to sail better than you have done before & in much the same way as a golf handicap. Just sailing as well as before will see you slide painfully down the results ladder. John's personal handicap will no doubt reduce dramatically following this recent success.

The Laser focus weekends have been selected and are in the calendar so if you are looking for a weekend with a big Laser fleet these will be the ones to aim for.

Also happening this weekend was the Elite Skiff training which has proved popular with some of the country's best sailors. This weekend it was Nick Craig & previous 3 time winner of the Endeavour Trophy and current RS400 and OK National Champion who was to be seen leading the fleet in a B14 crewed superbly by Toby Lewis who crewed and won the Endeavour this year crewing for Steve Tylecote. Also out was Peter Barton & current RS800 National Champion- trying his hand in a Musto Skiff, and the infamous Mark Barnes & current B14 national champion.

Starring in the racing this weekend was club member Tom Wright in his Musto Skiff who has improved dramatically over this training to take a win and a second in racing this weekend beating Richard Stenhouse in both races.

This training / racing has proved a popular format with training from 9 & 9 on the Saturday (these guys are devoted & I know - it was way after 9 that they finished studying the finer points of skiff sailing in our living room! & no X factor results for me!), and then joining the club racing on Sunday. I think there will be a few surprise faces at the front after all this effort. Many, many thanks to Richard and Kit who have as ever put an unbelievable amount of effort into organising the training.

The race officer/ mark laying course has been running in conjunction with this training which has worked well for both

sides. Organised by Richard Johnson and run this weekend by Chris Wright we should see a few more confident race officers on the water next year.

Then there was club racing too! Sailing up in the main pond area beside the dam it was Andrew and Chris Sampson in their Formula 18 who beat Roger Smedley and John Terry in their Formula 16 in the catamaran fleet. In the afternoon Roger and John got a win with Tony Lampitt winning the third race in his Hobie FX.

In the dinghy fleet it was Chris Wright in his phantom who clocked up two wins with Ros Nichols in her Europe getting a win in the afternoon race.

Ashore the clubhouse was buzzing as the cruiser fleet had their Christmas Lunch ‐ and tea it would seem!

Great fun on a weekend when most people were probably hiding indoors.

Laser Club Championship

1st std rig and overall and personal handicap ‐ Jon Williams

1st Radial ‐ Fiona Tylecote

Elite Skiff results

1st race Nick Craig and Toby Lewis ‐ B14

2nd race Tom Wright Musto Skiff

Catamarans

1st race ‐ Andrew and Chris Sampson ‐ Formula 18

2nd race - Roger Smedley and John Terry ‐ Formula 16

3rd race ‐ Tony Lampitt ‐ Hobie FX

Dinghies

1st and 3rd race Chris Wright - Phantom

2nd race Ros Nichols - Europe