

UK Laser Association

UK Laser Association Radial Qualifier at Highcliffe S.C., 24th & 25th March 2007

Report on the Alpha Fleet by Jon Emmett

The second Radial qualifier of 2007 was dominated by Masters World Champion Steve Cockerill, who won the event with a race to spare. 109 sailors sailed in predominantly 20 knots of gusty Northerly winds, which saw only around half the fleet completing the last race on Saturday due to cold and fatigue.

The first race set the scene with Cockerill on the left working his way through the fleet to the front. With a large breeze convergence on the left this was the place to be. Jon Emmett who was on the right managed to pull through the fleet to second but Cockerill sporting his brand new brilliant pink rash vest was away in the distance (and only visible due to his top!) Lizzie Vickers, fresh from Palma training took the third spot.

Race two and there was another run away winner, this time professional Radial sailor Ben Paton who was the most left hand boat. Alison Young and Phil Reynolds rounded behind Paton but by the end of the downwind it was Emmett in second, but Paton was already beyond reach. A determined charge saw Cockerill pull through to third by the finish.

The final race on Saturday was to prove crucial. Paton tried to squeeze up close to Emmett at the port end but neither could cross the line. The resulting tangle saw Paton retire and Emmett round the first mark mid-fleet. Cockerill made no mistake and led the race from start to finish with Emmett not able to get back in contact. Local sailor Rob Spencer finished second with David Jessop taking third spot.

Sunday was warmer and lighter but not a lot! Cockerill just needed to win the race to take the event. Emmett was once again caught battling with Paton at the pin end, as Paton tried to squeeze the fleet out. Cockerill tacked on and got into footing mode and pulled clear of the fleet. Emmett got into second by the end of the downwind and chased hard, drawing level with Cockerill on the run but the course was shortened, giving Cockerill the race and the event.

Race five and Stokes Bay Beta fleet winner Bob Cudmore port tacked the fleet and led Cockerill and Phil Reynolds round the windward mark. However Emmett moved into the lead on the top reach and made no mistakes to take the gun. Cudmore slipped back down the fleet and Cockerill whose work was already done, retired. Reynolds took second comfortably in front of Paton who just had water at the final mark on Harriette Trumble, which proved crucial in the overall scores (as Paton ended up tied on points with two other boats, coming out on top due to winning race two).

The full results and Ladders are on the website now.