

UK Laser Association

Stokes Bay Radial Qualifier

Report by Jon Emmett

On March 10th/11th well over a hundred Radials entered the Stokes Bay Qualifier, the first of the spring series, which will ultimately decide who goes to the 2007 Europeans. This is the last major event before the Olympic test regatta in August.

Once again the split fleet system was used and was tremendously successful with not a single general recall despite the current being under the fleet in three out of four races!!!

Saturday saw the wind come from the South at around seventeen knots but with gusts over twenty knots it was certainly a hard day for those new to Laser sailing.

Race one was initially led by Ben Paton before he was passed by Jon Emmett who extended his lead to the finish. Paton was chased hard by Laura Baldwin who scored the best ever finish at a qualifier race with a third. Baldwin is now off to Spain in preparation for the Barcelona regatta.

Race two saw Paton pushing the line hard again but this time the result was an OCS. Emmett was first around the top mark and pulled away from Steve Cockerill in second, with Andrea Brewster leading the chasing pack in third place.

Race three found Cockerill at the front of the fleet but a boat handling error at the leeward mark allowed the chasing pack through. At the top mark it was Emmett chased hard by Lizzie Vickers. At the final mark Emmett got cover by a standard rig back marker and Vickers sailed under to take the bullet to leave her in second position overnight (behind Emmett).

Sunday and the breeze never really filled in completely and by the end saw sailors just drifting over the line... (and no final race)

Race four was initially delayed as the breeze was filling in. At the top mark it was David Jessop in the lead but by the bottom mark it was Emmett. However Jessop found more pressure on the next lap to take the final race from Charlotte Dobson with Emmett sailing his discard.