

Radial Qualifier at Lowestoft

report from Jon Emmett

Radial Masters champion Steve Cockerill dominated the last spring qualifier held at Lowestoft over the first May bank holiday, never finishing out of the top three in a fleet of over eighty boats, and winning with half the points of his nearest rival.

Race one saw a couple of general recalls before the fleet finally got away with the early leaders coming from the pin end. With the current under the fleet it was easy to over stand the windward mark, but early leader Ali Young got it spot on, to lead around the top mark. Unfortunately she failed to notice that the Radials were sailing an inner top course (the standards were on the outer loop).

Jon Emmett took advantage and pulled away down wind with Young in second, chased by Cockerill. Up the next beat Cockerill tacked off left with Young, and moved past her. Emmett covered the middle and stayed in the lead with Laura Baldwin going right and moving up to third. Robert Spencer sailed a great race to take third off Baldwin, with initial leader Young pushed into fifth place.

Race two saw many of the top performers struggling to get off the line. David Jessop took advantage: extracting himself from the fleet he moved to the right and got the shift first and sailed off to a commanding lead. Meanwhile Cockerill clawed his way back through the fleet to grab another second place and moved into first place overall. Top Junior, Martin Evans from Dabchicks, took third place, definitely a name to look out for in the future. Spencer had another good result with a fourth, with Young, top lady in fifth.

Race three and Emmett was the first to get clear of the fleet and pulled away downwind from Phil Reynolds. These two pulled clear of the fleet, but Cockerill was on the charge and managed to get into third place up the final beat. Athens Olympian Baldwin secured another fourth and once again Young was fifth! This left Emmett the overnight leader.

Sunday was all change with both the wind and the current coming from the opposite direction (still wind again tide!) The fleet was very well behaved and both races went ahead without a hitch.

Race four Jessop port tacked the fleet, followed by Cockerill, making their way right. Jessop lacked the pace of Cockerill who pulled clear. Young rounded the windward mark in second with Emmett close behind. Young and Emmett were having a tussle which allowed Cockerill to extend his lead with the order the same at the finish. Jessop managed to hold onto fourth place with Baldwin in fifth place.

Race five Emmett won the pin but could not tack and Cockerill who had a poorer start managed to duck the lead boats at the port end and cross the rest of the fleet and get to the right. At the top mark Cockerill was first with Emmett second. Emmett passed Cockerill, but stayed too long inshore and was passed by Cockerill and Jessop. Cockerill led at the windward mark the second time with Emmett passing Jessop on the reach with Cockerill first and Emmett second at the penultimate mark. To win the event Emmett had to pass Cockerill, so went right into stronger tide but bigger wind and waves, and drew level half way down the run. However the breeze died and Cockerill sailed away with Emmett stuck out in the strong tide dropping to tenth, giving Cockerill a comfortable victory. Jessop also lost out being passed by Young (second) and Spencer (third); Baldwin ended a consistent day with another fifth.

Overall results may be found at www.laser.org.uk