

Laser Standard Qualifier – Paignton - 22nd, 23rd of October.

The 3rd and final of Autumn and the last of the year was held at Paignton Sailing Club and looking at the forecast, was set to be a windy one!

The Laser Standard fleet reached the racing area and found some very gusty and shifty conditions due to the wind coming from the cliffs. With a range of wind from 10-18 knots and some big shifts, racing was going to be tricky.

In race 1, a few boats managed to tack straight away from the port biased end and lead out to the right. This was key to be in the leading group at the windward mark. Nick Thompson lead at the first mark followed by Alex Mills Barton and Paul Goodison. Close behind was the pack which was very tightly fought. Goodison overtook Mills Barton on the run and had caught right up to Thompson who was overhauled on the second beat. Goodison took the first bullet followed closely by Thompson and Mills Barton. Martin Evans managed to put some good distance between himself and the pack to finish 4th followed by Lorenzo Chiavarini.

Race 2 followed a similar path and the leaders were those who managed to tack and cross the fleet from the port end early on. Goodison lead at the windward mark followed closely by a group of Mills Barton, Ben Cornish and Thompson. There was a bit of a gap before the chasing pack which gave the leading group some breathing space to get away. Thompson overtook Cornish on the first run to catch right up to Mills Barton who he passed on the second beat. Goodison took his second bullet followed by Thompson, Mills Barton and Cornish. Matt Reid worked his way to the front of the pack to take 5th place.

In race 3, the line was a bit less biased but with a black flag now up the fleet had to be careful. Mills Barton was over and was called back after the start. Goodison was held out to the left after the start whilst Evans and Thompson made the most of a left hand shift and got onto port early. Evans played the shifts perfectly and had a good lead at the Windward mark which he held comfortably till the finish. Thompson had another 2nd followed by Goodison, Jack Wetherell and Reid to make up the top 5. The forecast for Sunday was 25-30 knots all day so lots of food and sleep was needed after sailing.

The forecast was fortunately wrong and the fleet were sent out and started on time in a 15-18 knot wind with some even bigger gusts. Ken had decided to use a triangle sausage course to keep the fleet closer due to the forecast. Race 1 was started with a port biased line again and Thompson took advantage of this, winning the pin and tacking to cross the fleet after a few minutes. Goodison and Mills Barton followed whilst Thompson lead out to the right. The wind went left at the top just enough to allow Goodison to beat Thompson to the windward mark. They were followed by Mills Barton, Evans and Wetherell. Places stayed the same on the reaches, but Thompson took advantage of the shifts on the second beat to take the lead and the bullet from Goodison. Mills Barton and Evans had a good battle down the last run swapping places. Mills Barton won the battle with Evans just before the final mark and the finish. They were followed by Wetherell.

Goodison and Thompson fancied an early leave and decided not to compete in the final race which left the other sailors a good fight for a bullet. The line was very even and the fleet was spread out along the line. Evans who had started at the starboard end took the shifts up the middle and lead at the windward mark, followed by Mills Barton, Wetherell, Reid and Elliot Hanson. With the gusts being so big now, it was a matter of hanging on down the reaches and trying to attack on the second beat. It was all still very close at the leeward mark so was going to be a good battle. Mills Barton managed to take Evans at the top of the beat with a good shift and Reid had jumped up to 3rd and close behind. Evans and Reid both overhauled Mills Barton on the final run and Evans took his second bullet. Reid finished 2nd, followed by Mills Barton, Wetherell and Hanson.

Overall results were: 1st- Paul Goodison 7 points, 2nd – Nick Thompson 7 points, 3rd – Martin Evans 10 points, 4th – Alex Mills Barton 12 points, 5th – Jack Wetherell 19 points (1st youth).

We all had a great weekend sailing, so thanks to Paignton Sailing Club for hosting the event and making sure everyone got on and off the beach safely. Also thanks to Ken and the race committee for running the racing well and efficiently so no one got cold in between races.

Results can be found at:

<http://www.kbsuk.com/data/LaserEvents/data/results/paigntonstd.2011nh.html>.