

## **Noble Marine Laser Radial Autumn Qualifier, Hayling Island Sailing Club, 8–9 October**

**By Ben Whaley**

79 Radials turned up to Hayling Island SC on Saturday 8 October for the second Noble Marine Autumn Qualifier to a cloudy day with the looming prospect of rain. Nevertheless, the wind looked promising for both days from a steady northerly direction, motivating the Race Officer to set the course further out to sea. Before Race 1 began, there were tears to be shed, as 15 competitors were black flagged over the course of two general recalls. The remaining fleet set off for a game of find the wind which brought a shift – usually on either edge. At the top mark, it was a youth one and two as Ben Whaley led from Will Bedford after a rather large left shift at the top gave the pair a little breathing space. However, the wind filled in stronger from behind to allow for close racing as Whaley managed to hold off Steph Wingeatt for line honours, followed by Paul Moughtin-Leay.

Race 2 saw the return of many of the top sailors in the fleet as Rheanna Pavey convincingly took advantage of the left-hand side up the first beat to lead from George Povall, with Finnish sailor and under-21 Radial world champion, Monika Mikkola, rounding up a female dominated top three.

The final race of day one promised a little more breeze, though still only in the 9–12knt range. A congested, but advantageous, pin start allowed the leaders to once again lead into the windward mark from the left at the top of the beat, with Ellie Cumpsty holding off Whaley to gain line honours after an impressive final downwind. Mikkola once again rounded off the top three in consistent style. After day one (with a single discard), it was Whaley on 3 points leading overnight from Mikkola on 6 and Wingeatt on 7.

If it wasn't for the seemingly icy northerly breeze, day two promised almost champagne sailing conditions because there was a little more wind strength in the range of 11–18knts throughout the day. Whaley once again started the day strongly, posting his second bullet of the event in a tight battle with Jon Emmett at the front. Cumpsty posted another strong result, rounding off the top three after another solid final downwind.

Race 5 brought a turn of events as the right-hand side of the first beat came in favourably with a nice band of pressure and right shift characterizing the gain. Hannah Snellgrove took full advantage of this gain to lead convincingly around the course, with yet another female dominated top three created by strong performances from Povall and Mikkola.

This set up Race 6 as the decider of the event, with many already having used their discards on black flag disqualifications. Despite this, the last race was postponed for a while due to a shifting wind as well as a tense black flag general recall, with 14 competitors falling prey to the board of shame posted on the back of the Committee Boat, initiating their early return to shore. The first beat of the final race

brought an early surge from the right before, finally, the left came in stronger at the top to allow Mikkola to lead the fleet and take her first bullet of the event, closely followed by Povall and Snellgrove. With Whaley and Mikkola both on 15 points, this left the overall event win to be decided on countback. Whaley, who was holding one more first, narrowly took the victory from Mikkola. Povall rounded up the top three with an impressively consistent performance, with Emmett in fourth and Cumpsty in fifth.

Results:

1 Ben Whaley, 15pts

2 Monika Mikkola, 15pts

3 Gerogina Povall, 20pts

Full results:

<http://www.kbsuk.com/laser/events/showrace.asp?EventID=88&RaceURL=%5Bresults%5D/haylingrad.2016nh.html>