

UK Laser Association

LaserPerformance World Open – fun, Fun, FUN!

Report by Katie Ashworth (LP), Images from Ian Roman



One hundred and thirty two boats took part in the LaserPerformance World Open Regatta at the Weymouth and Portland Sailing Academy, UK this weekend. Another 95 competitors took part in the US at Sail Newport. The event mission was “fun afloat and fun ashore.” It is fair to say, mission well and truly accomplished!

With registration complete on Saturday [26th June] the seven fleets launched and headed out onto Portland Harbour and three different courses. The three Laser classes (Standards, Radials and 4.7's) on course one, the double-handed classes, Laser Vagos, Laser 2000's and Laser Bahias to course two and the Laser Pico class to course three.

Temperatures soared into the mid twenties but the wind was neither strong or from a consistent direction. The Laser classes only managed one race on Saturday as the Race Officer struggled with wind shifts of over 80 degrees. By mid afternoon on Saturday a thick sea mist rolled across Portland Harbour, putting an end to racing for the day. Conditions on Sunday were better with a steady sea breeze arriving in good time.

For many, the LaserPerformance World Open was a major date in their established racing calendar, but for others, the LaserPerformance World Open was the first racing event they had taken part in. Weymouth local, Adam Greaves, who graduated from the RYA's OnBoard Club into SailLaser Weymouth's Race Club has never taken part in an event of this kind before. Coming ashore on Saturday from racing in the Laser 4.7 fleet, Adam was bubbling with excitement, “I've had such a great day, I learnt loads and it's the first time I've seen the committee boat with all the racing flags, I can't wait for tomorrow!”



The Laser Standard class was led over night on Saturday by John Ling, Chairman of the UK Laser Association. David Freeman of Queen Mary Sailing Club led the only race on Saturday [in the Laser class] until the final windward leg where he “politely stepped aside to allow the Chairman to win!” Freeman went on to explain, “Even if I didn’t win on the water, I’ll be sure to win in the bar tonight!”

A notable entry in the Laser class is Andy Alan who entered the LaserPerformance World Open with a boat that was built in 1976 and has recently been “Activated” through the Activate Your laser Fleet project. With updated control lines and a polished hull and foils, Geriatric Bear, with a sail number of just 30595 finished fifth in class and proves that a “geriatric” hull, with a little TLC is just as competitive as a brand new hull! Andy commented, “This event has been a joy of one-design racing in a fabulous location amongst friendly and competitive club level racing sailors, backed by a superb organisation both ashore and afloat.

James and Katie Bellchamber, fresh faced having returned from a Neilson holiday in Greece took part in the Laser Radial class. “We’ve never actually raced before, but we are really excited to be here and taking part in the Laser Radial class.” In the Radial fleet, Jon Emmett also lead for the whole of the first race on Saturday, before picking the wrong side of the course on the final beat and finished second. “The wind was pretty shifty and unfortunately my gamble didn’t pay off.” Ben Elvin went on to win the first race. In the final results of the Radial class, Emmett first, Elvin second.

On Saturday night, competitors enjoyed a BBQ supper and were entertained with a Bucking Bronco, Bouncy Castle and live music from the excellent Steve Doig Band.

A key part of the LaserPerformance World Open was the fact that there was an identical event taking place in the US, hosted by LaserPerformance North America on the same weekend. At the end of race in both countries, class winners results were entered into a scoring matrix, the same used at Cowes Week, to deliver the overall winner. It is with great pleasure that we announce the winner of the LaserPerformance World Open 2010 as Nick Valente from the US Sunfish Class, in second place Ross McFarlane in the Laser 4.7 class and in third place Eliza Richartz in the US Laser Radial class. Congratulations!



The resounding response from sailors as they packed up their boats after sailing on Sunday was the venue for the inaugural LaserPerformance World Open could not have been better and the organisation of the event could not have been smoother. Competitors left WPNSA with the promise to come again in 2011, and bring their entire club fleet with them.

Thanks go to the sponsors of the LaserPerformance World Open, Maclaren (www.MaclarenBaby.com) and Harken (www.Harken.com).

Overall UK Results:

	Laser Standard	Laser Radial	Laser 4.7
1st.	Ian Morgan	Jon Emmett	Ross McFarlane
2nd.	Dave Freeman	Ben Elvin	William Batt
3rd.	Mark Barnes	Dan Ellie	Tom Rowell