

Laser Performance UK National and Open Laser Championships, Mount Batten Centre, Plymouth, 21–28 July 2018

Supported by Tideway Investment Partners LLP and Phoenix Marine

Day one reports by Matt Beck and James Foster

A large fleet of Lasers have assembled at the Mount Batten Centre in Plymouth for this year's UK National and Open Laser Championships. Sunday saw the first day's racing for the 174 entries composed of 52 in the 4.7 fleet, 85 in the Radial and 37 in the Standard.

4.7

Sunday began with plenty of wind on the way out starting with 10–12knts, but unfortunately, after the Standard fleet was away, the wind dropped meaning the 4.7's first start was abandoned. This was then followed by a general recall where multiple boats were black flagged. The 4.7 race was soon away when the wind filled back in across the race course. As the wind was in a right phase, the starboard end of the line was favoured. Many boats who had a bad start were forced to tack onto a port tack, leading them away from the windward mark. A large band of pressure on the left-hand side of the course, attracted many sailors and caused a left-hand shift, which led the front of the fleet up to the windward mark. The second beat started with very little breeze; this made finding the pressure the key gain feature on the race course. Another band of pressure on the left side of the course, which was missed by many sailors. This allowed the sailors on the left side of the course to make large gains and take the lead. Lorcan Knowles took the win, with Sam Dickinson second and Moss Simington third.

The second race started with slightly more wind and a pin-biased line. Within a minute of the start, the wind shifted right restricting many of the boats on the left from tacking. This right-hand phase led the whole fleet up the left lay-line creating very tight racing. A few boats who started at the starboard end of the line got clear ahead and led the race around the windward mark. The second beat started in a right phase and very little wind yet again. By this point in the race, the tide had changed creating large waves and chop because it was wind against tide. Sailors on the right-

hand of the beat, took advantage of more tide, which swept them quickly up to the windward mark. Finley Dickinson won the second race, while Lorcan Knowles followed up his win in the first race with a second and Josh Morgan was third.

Going into the second day, Lorcan Knowles is leading the 4.7 fleet, with Finley Dickinson in second and James Foster in third.



4.7s in action. Photo: Paul Gibbins Photography

Radial

With 85 entries in the Radial fleet for this year's Nationals, the sailors were asked at the pre-race briefing to indicate their preference for racing as a single or split fleet. The result being a strong preference for a single fleet – more on this later in terms of the challenges of getting starts away for a fleet of 85 enthusiastic boats!

With the Plymouth Sound expected to be busy, the decision was made to sail outside the breakwater. After a bit of a delay with launching, we made our way out to the course area in patchy conditions, but with the hope that the sea breeze would build. After some delays for the Standards and 4.7s to get their first race away, Race 1 for the Radials was a BFD start. Oliver Sturley made a strong start and was first around the windward mark, but was overtaken by George Povall and Jon Emmett on the run. Conditions were light but fairly consistent, with the finishing positions being Povall, Sturley and Emmett.

Race 2 turned in a bit of epic, with five attempts at starting and multiple black flags. Barty Grey made a strong start from the middle of the line and managed to stay towards the front, finishing fourth. Povall and Emmett demonstrated their consistency finishing second and third, with French sailor Alexandre Kowalski taking the win.

At the end of the first day, the top three sailors are George Povall, Jon Emmett and Christopher Jones.



The Radial fleet in Plymouth. Photo: Paul Gibbins Photography

Standard

In the Standard fleet, Sam Whaley began the day strongly with a win in Race 1. Joe Mullan was second and Dan Whiteley was third. However, both Whaley and Mullan were black flagged in Race 2. Lewis Smith won that race, Dan Whiteley was second and Craig Williamson third. This means that overnight Dan Whiteley is leading the fleet, Lewis Smith is second and Craig Williamson third.



Standards on day one. Photo: Paul Gibbins Photography

Full results: www.kbsuk.com/laser/events/index.asp?EventID=107

Images from: <https://pgc.pixieset.com>