

Rooster Laser Masters National Championships

The event sponsored by Rooster Sailing took place at Whitstable YC, Kent over the extended weekend 1 – 3 July and attracted an entry of 94. The fleet was split 54 standards and 40 radials, each with their own start. The championship was also the second UK world-ranking event for the 2012 World Masters to be sailed in Brisbane, Australia.

The forecast for the three days was dire to say the least, indicating a maximum gust wind strength of 5 – 7 knots if any. The possibility of not sailing at all was a very real possibility.

On Friday the weather went to forecast with the reasonable morning wind dropping off to an inconsistent 3 knots by the scheduled start time of 13:00 hrs. Race Officer Ken Falcon went afloat looking for consistent wind and to determine if it was possible to set a course. The result of the search between Southend and Whitstable was there was none and fair racing could not take place. The fleet rigged, remained on shore and it turned out to be a good idea not to put on a wetsuit as the temperature under the clear blue skies reached 22 deg C. At 16:00 hrs the day was abandoned, the boats de-rigged and solace sought in the Whitstable YC bar. Later in the evening Phil Beed from Stokes Bay presented the annual Laser Masters trivia quiz that happened to be won by a group of Stokes Bay sailors. Everyone was assured there was no prior knowledge!

Saturday started off as though it was going the same way as Friday with an early reasonable wind, little cloud and rising temperatures. The first race start had been brought forward by an hour to catch this wind and possibly complete two races so there was at least a series. In fact the wind remained all day, averaging 8 knots, reaching 12 knots at times and only dropping to 6 knots late afternoon from a NEE direction. This enabled four races to be sailed bringing in the discard.

Races 1 and 2 started without any need for the black flag but by the time it came to start race 3 the tide had turned to the ebb. Although not particularly strong, boats found themselves being carried over the start line resulting in the standard fleet having three general recalls, two under the black flag. One of those to suffer was last year's winner Orlando Gledhill. The radials met the same fate on their start but only had one general recall. On returning to shore, following the racing, competitors were given a bowl of pasta by the Whitstable YC galley after what had been a long but worthwhile day on the water. This was followed later by the championship dinner on a very pleasant summer's evening!

At the end of Saturday Steve Cockerhill was leading the standard fleet on 3 points having scored 1, 2, 1, 1 followed by Alan Davis on 7 points and Orlando Gledhill on 12 points. In the radial fleet Ian Jones was leading with 5 points having scored 3, 1, 1, 1 followed by Ian Gregory on 6 points and Ann Keats on 7 points.

Sunday morning did not even have the early morning wind of the previous two days and the prospect of sailing looked small especially as there was no sign of a sea breeze. What wind there was, followed the forecast starting off west moving north and then towards the east. The fleets rigged and the race committee went afloat to search the estuary for consistent conditions. Now and again the sails rustled in the boat park to entice the sailors but this was only the local land effect. However, just after 12:00 hrs the fleets were called afloat, as from almost the same direction as Saturday, a 6 – 8 knot wind had appeared. This enabled two more races to be sailed to finish the event.

Cockerhill maintained his position in the standard fleet with 1 and 2 to give 6 points total from Davis on 12 points and Gledhill on 21 points. In the radial fleet Keats overhauled the two Ian's scoring 2 and 1 to finish on 10 points from Gregory on 11 points and Jones on 13 points.

Thanks go to Rooster for sponsoring the event, Whitstable YC's army of volunteers for putting on the event, in particular Tom Bailey who acted as their front man, David Lowe the club commadore for presenting the prizes, Ken Falcon for RO and Robert Owens for being the International Judge.

Results (overall in brackets)

		Standard Rig	Hill Head	Radial Rig	Sutton Bingham
Master	1 st	Steve Cockerhill(1 st)	Oxford	Chris Jones(4 th)	Burghfield
	2 nd	Alan Davis(2 nd)	ESTM	Bruce Snelling(9 th)	Netley
	3 rd	Thomas Muller(4 th)	Germany	Andrew Chapman(13 th)	
Apprentice	1 st	Orlando Gledhill(3 rd)	Queen Mary	Ian Gregory(2 nd)	Frensham Pond
	2 nd	Rupert Bedell(5 th)	Queen Mary	Ian Jones(3 rd)	Dovestone
	3 rd	Anatoly Kriewelich(12 th)	Queen Mary	Mark Jones(7 th)	Oxford
Grandmaster	1 st	Peter Sherwin(7 th)	Chew Valley	Ann Keates(1 st)	Parkstone
	2 nd	Mac Courts(9 th)	Stokes Bay	John Reay(6 th)	Island Barn
	3 rd	David Binding(14 th)	Weir Wood	Dave Holloway(8 th)	Highcliffe
Great Grandmaster	1 st			Keith Wilkins(5 th)	Chelmarsh
	2 nd			Ian Rawett(14 th)	Grafham
	3 rd			Mike Kinnear(15 th)	Starcross