

UK IOM Ranking 1 and 2 at Castle Semple, Lochwinnoch, Renfrewshire

Report by John Owens

Photos by Bill Odger

With the European Championships confirmed by IOMICA next year in Croatia the GBR IOM fleet ventured to Scotland to commence the 2017 class ranking series hosted by Buchanness Radio Yacht Club on behalf of the MYA Scottish District.

With 36 skippers competing, comprising of the best radio sailors in the UK, six world champions from radio and dinghy disciplines combined with a warm Scottish welcome and sunshine why would you want to be anywhere else?

Day One

The day started with a light WSW breeze, with PRO John Owens taking the decision to sail three fleets, racing got underway on time with Brad Gibson, Josh King and Paul Allen winning the seeding races.

The breeze gently increased during the day veering more towards the West with the breeze coming off the bank creating some interesting shifts at the top end of the course. Throughout the day, the vagaries of the breeze interacting with the landscape made for increasingly tricky conditions creating some challenging snakes and ladders for the skippers to negotiate. At the end of the Day One, current World and European champion Brad Gibson once again topped the leaderboard with fellow Birkenhead skipper Graham Elliott taking second and Darin Ballington third.

The fleet retired to the Bowfield Hotel for the now traditional Scottish family social event and to reminisce on any points left out on the water.

Day One - results

Position	Skipper	Sail #	Club/City	Hull	Score
1	Brad Gibson	42	Birkenhead MY&PBC	POP	7
2	Graham Elliott	9	Birkenhead MY&PBC	BritPop!	17
3	Darin Ballington	98	Manor Park RSC	BritPop!	17
4	Rob Walsh	25	Fleetwood MY&PBC	BritPop!	20
5	Chris Harris	92	Windrush RYC	BritPop!	32
6	Peter Stollery	39	Guildford MYC	BritPop!	34

Day Two

With an earlier start and a stronger A rig breeze racing once again got underway on time with Peter Stollery, Colin Goodman and Graham Bantock winning the seeding races.

The breeze increased by midday with Simon Robinson in his V8 being the first to try the smaller B rig, whilst looking a sound decision at the time the odd soft patch proving a stumbling block especially downwind. Throughout the day racing was especially close with the fleet tightly packed in each race, a trend which is notable throughout the results. No skipper escaped the course snakes and many skippers (including World Champions!) taking excursions to a lower fleet or finding the elevator to a higher fleet.

Fleet behaviour on the water was excellent and there were no Protest Committees. This, combined with more wind an efficient launch and retrieval team allowed eight races to be completed by the three fleets. Peter Stollery won the day with ten points after eight races, proving there is still plenty of life left in his seven-year-old orange Britpop which took him to glory at the 2011 IOM worlds at West Kirby. Ex-Fireball World Champion Colin Goodman took a well-earned second place after a disappointing first day with Brad Gibson taking third two points further back.

Day Two - results

Position	Skipper	Sail #	Club/City	Hull	Score
1	Peter Stollery	39	Guildford MYC	BritPop!	10
2	Colin Goodman	61	Coalhouse Fort MYC	BritPop!	18
3	Brad Gibson	42	Birkenhead MY&PBC	POP	20
4	Rob Walsh	25	Fleetwood MY&PBC	BritPop!	29
5	Chris Harris	92	Windrush RYC	BritPop!	30
6	Darin Ballington	98	Manor Park RSC	BritPop!	30

Overall

Castle Semple provides an excellent sailing venue for skippers as the control area is slightly elevated providing a good look-down view of the yachts along the entire length of the course. In addition, the cooperation of the Castle Semple Visitor Centre management was critical to the event and a great debt of gratitude is due to them. The site provided a very close interface with the public and the IOM skippers were superb ambassadors for the IOM Class and radio sailing in line with the RYA Charter. Well done everybody!

Race Team: John Owens (RO), Richard Ennos, Nick Cowern, Bill Odger, Carl Burrows, David Smith, Cathy Reid, Bill Reid, Ian Thompson, Steve Herridge, Pat Johnson, Sandy Mackay