

MYA Scottish District - 2023 DF65 District Championship, Greenock (at Barshaw Park)

Saturday 16th September 2023

Report by Richard Rowan and David Smith

The event was originally due to be held at Greenock's Murdieston Dam, but due to a valve malfunction, the water level at the Dam fell very quickly over a 24-hour period and was not expected to recover sufficiently by the day of the event. Thus, the event was moved to Barshaw Park with thanks to the Paisley Club in facilitating the move.

Of the eight skippers who entered the event, seven turned up on the day and six finished. Unfortunately, a number of potential entrants (including Chris Nichols, the defending champion) were unable to take part due to other commitments. However, it was observed that those who did take part represented the top of the DF65 fleet in the southern part of the District. A warm welcome was extended to Alan McKechnie who, with assistant and boat tuner Bill Odger, made the long journey south from Peterhead.

As everyone gathered for the start, the skippers found themselves racing in light and variable winds mostly from the east but with occasional puffs coming in from the north east. The race team laid the course across the southern end of the pond, starting with a traditional sausage and triangle course which was quickly reduced to a windward/leeward course. Each race comprised 3 windward legs.

The racing turned out to be very tense for the skippers. They had to watch out for holes in the wind, gentle puffs coming along with 45 degree changes in direction, or appearing on one side of the beat and not the other. This fluky wind created a very open competition.

Of the seven starters, it was apparent that 4 boats were generally heading each race. Seven races were held in the morning and at lunch time after 1 discard was taken into account, Simon Thomson and John Taylor were on equal points but Simon was in front with three first places against one for John. The two leaders were closely followed by Robert Rooney with two first places. At this point there was only 2 points between the 3 leading skippers. Ian Davidson, who managed one first place, was lying a little further back in 4th place some 4 points behind Robert.

In the afternoon session, another 9 races were held so that the 3rd discard point was reached. John Taylor took a firm grip of the event immediately after the lunch break by achieving a run of five first places with one second place. Over the afternoon session, Simon Thomson was finding the conditions tricky but nevertheless managed 3 firsts and a second. Robert Rooney could only manage one first which resulted in him falling behind the first two boats. Ian Davidson had three top scores right at the end of the day's racing to bring him closer to the top three boats. Bob Collins must be commended for sailing the entire day using his A rig - it was very clear that the A+ rigs used by the other boats were significantly faster than the A rig.

With the help of the wind direction remaining mostly in the east, 16 races were run during the event. The final score line showed that John Taylor was the winner with a corrected score of 21 points. Simon Thomson came in second with 26 points and Robert Rooney ended up third with 29 points.

Final scores

#	Skipper	Sail #	Club	Score
1	John Talyor	28	Fleetwood MY&PBC	21
2	Simon Thomson	264	Greenock MY&PBC	26
3	Robert Rooney	71	Paisley MYC	48
4	Ian Davidson	00	Greenock MY&PBC	39
5	Bob Collins	17	Paisley MYC	69
6	Alan McKechnie	59	Buchanness RYC	74
7	Bob Hughes	29	Greenock MY&PBC	86

Race team: Richard Rowan (RO), Bill Terry (ARO and Starting Line), Keith Murray (Finishing Line), David Smith (Scorer)

Photos: Photos by Richard Rowan, David Smith and Bill Odger.