

2011 MYA radio Marblehead National Championship, Euro Grand Prix 1 & GAMES 2

2011 is the MYA's Centenary year and it was fitting therefore that Guildford Model Yacht Club, who instigated the very first Marblehead National Championship in 1974 should run this event again and look back to compare the two events. Both were run over two days at Elstead Moat and had just over two dozen entries with an international flavour: an American Soling M challenged our top skippers in vain at the end of the event. However whereas each competitor then sailed just 12 races against only five other competitors in a 'perfect' schedule, each skipper at Abbey Meads lake sailed between 17 and 21 heats against 13 other skippers over much longer 600 metre courses. The event attracted 26 entries from 17 clubs including three from France, one each from Belgian and Ireland and included two juniors. This National Championship was the first of the seven Euro Grand Prix series held in five different countries and the second of the GAMES series of 10 races for Marblehead's in England and Scotland.

Saturday, 26th March

A rather grey misty morning greeted competitors with very little wind coming from every direction. It was a nightmare for PRO Roger Stollery who changed the course virtually every heat until Race 5 when it settled down from the East North East as forecast, but still light at 1-5 mph and very shifty. Richard Thompson, chairman of the ISAF/IRSA Appendix E working party was invited to take part in this event as umpire 'buddied' with observers from the heat not racing, as part of building his experience of radio racing. This he enjoyed and with many experienced and well behaved sailors racing in this class, there was no need for any penalty calls.

The French pair, Laurent Gerbeaud and Gilles Di Crescenzo dominated Races 1, 2 and 3 with a win each making the local skippers looked decidedly poor with only Peter Stollery, who could not get out of 'B' heat in Race 3, challenging them to win Race 4. At lunch the two Frenchmen were miles ahead with just four points each, six points ahead of Derek Priestley in third place. Lunchtime gave the opportunity for competitors to look back over the last hundred years with the MYA Centenary display boards on show in the gazebo.

Peter continued to pick the shifts well to win Race 5, but could not prevent Gilles winning the next one. Mark Dennis found the best route to the windward mark avoiding the holes in the wind to win Race 7 from Belgian Eric Van der Kindere and Martin Crysell. Laurent came back on form to win the last race of the day, despite the early lead being taken by last race specialist John Cleave, who had to be content with second, whilst Irishman, Andrew Crosby also had his best result in third place. The results with two discards were very close with Laurent on 15 and Gilles and Peter tied with 16 points.

All retired to the local Boathouse restaurant overlooking the River Thames for the Centenary dinner, which was a great success.

Sunday, 27th March

Despite losing an hour's sleep with the clocks going forward, everyone was keen to get sailing and the racing started on time in extremely cold conditions. Fortunately the sun came out later in the day and the wind stayed generally in an East North East direction and a simple windward/leeward course with a leeward gate was laid. The wind still had huge variations both in strength and direction to frustrate skipper's strategies. Racing started as yesterday's finished with the French dominating with a win in Race 9, but Rob Walsh improved his challenge with his

best result to win Race 10. Peter was seeing the wind shifts well to win Race 11, and finished first again in Race 12. However his protest of principle, after a three boat contact at the windward mark did not go as he expected either in the SYRPH, after which Hugh McAdoo retired, or in the protest hearing that followed and he was disqualified. At lunch this left all 5 top boats within a few points of each other.

Peter responded by winning both Race 13 'B' and 'A' heats, whilst Gilles was having problems with his radio gear finishing at the bottom of 'A' heat. Local skipper, Martin Crysell had put in some consistent results throughout the event, but none as good as Race 14, which he won from Derek and Peter. Highlight for 14 year old Paul Morgan was finishing fourth in Race 15B and getting a round of applause, after struggling all day with the strategy for making the best of the fluctuating wind. As is often the case, once promoted to 'A' heat he immediately sailed his best race and finished third behind Laurent and Peter to another round of applause!

Going into Race 16, the top five skippers were within six points of each other, so the results hinged on this final race. Gilles was still having trouble with his radio gear and could not finish the race, whilst Fleetwood boys, Rob and Derek finished in fifth and sixth behind Irishman Andrew, Laurent and Hugh McAdoo with his best result in second place, leaving Peter to win both the race and the Championship.

At the prize giving the Guildford team were thanked for putting on such a good event. Each overseas competitor received a special 'English' prize and Belgian Eric Van Der Kindere, who lives in Marseille was delighted to receive the 'furthest travelled' prize. Neither the winner of the 'Classic Cup' for boats built before 2000, Andrew Crosby sailing a 1998 'Paradox' nor junior Paul Morgan were presented with their prizes as they were not available, but were dispatched shortly after the event. Finally, in Guildford Model Yacht Club tradition there was a prize for last place: without competitors at the back you cannot have winners at the front!

When the TOT Trophy results were announced there was a murmur amongst the competitors, who had expected the team of Peter, Derek and Alan Viney to win. However such is the fairness of choosing the teams with one each from the top, middle and bottom third of the results after Race 3, the result is always in doubt until the end. The team's result depends on all three skippers and in this case it was Mark Dennis, Gilles Di Crescenzo and Hugh McAdoo that took away the trophies.

Results: (place, name, boat number, club, design, score)

1st Peter Stollery GBR39 Guildford Crazy Tube Too 35, 2nd Laurent Gerbeaud FRA171 UNCL Skalpel 46, 3rd Rob Walsh GBR25 Fleetwood Starkers 55, 4th Derek Priestley GBR 164 Fleetwood 56, 5th Gilles Di Crescenzo FRA 06 CV Saint-Quentin Skalpel 61, 6th Martin Crysell GBR52 Guildford Rok 62, 7th Mark Dennis GBR119 Chelmsford Prime Number 83, 8th John Cleave GBR44 Ryde Skalpel 93, 9th Roy Stevens GBR54 Tri-services Prime Number 98, 10th Andrew Crosbie IRL98 Cork Paradox 104, 11th David Coode GBR86 Guildford Tiranha 116, 12th John Male GBR56 Three Rivers Starkers 118, 13th Eric Van der Kindere BEL157 UNM Skalpel 132, 14th Peter Crisp GBR23 Swanley Starkers 143, 15th Hugh McAdoo GBR16 Guildford Prime Number 150, 16th Hugh Cripps GBR37 Canterbury Monarch 175, 17th Bernard Merlaud FRA19 CN Viry Chatillon Starkers 183, 18th Paul Morgan GBR17 Guildford Crazy Tube Too 200, 19th John Shorrock GBR07 Reading Starkers 205, 20th Alan Viney GBR51 Guildford Prime Number 214, 21st Damian Ackroyd Leeds & Bradford Starkers 227, 22nd Phil Broszek GBR117 Guildford Roar Edge 285, 23rd CJ Vice GBR34 Guildford Mystick 300, 24th Peter Mitchell GBR417 Frensham Pond Roar Edge 302.

Winner of Classic Cup – pre-2000 boats, Andrew Crosby Paradox 10th 104.

TOT trophies – Gilles Di Crescenzo, Mark Dennis and Hugh McAdoo, 268.

Junior winner – Paul Morgan 18th 200.

Race committee – PRO Roger Stollery, ARO Gordon Edmondson, Umpire Richard Townsend (Saturday only) John Townsend, Mark Mortimore, Peter Miles, Alan Morgan, Slieve McGalliard, Charles Smith