

IOM National Championships

The Championship was held over the three days 2nd to 4th June. 73 skippers and WAGS made the trip to Furzton Lake, Milton Keynes, home of the Two Islands RYC. This years' entry included 13 overseas skippers with Soren Andersen from Denmark the top placed in 12th position.

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Registration and measurement took place in the adjacent Premier Inn and Furzton Lake pub which was to become the focal point, accommodation and de brief centre over the weekend. Skippers were called to briefing at 9.45am on Saturday 2nd June 2012 by PRO Graham Allen and Event Coordinator Keith Coxon. The entry included a good mix of youth and experience; the earlier ranking events had shown that competition was likely to be intense, a number of the newer skippers probably feeling that their expectations were growing as skill levels increased and valuable large fleet experience had been gained since last year's event.

Sadly the briefing ended with the news that one of the entered competitors, Ray Flanagan of the Bideford & Devon MBC had passed away in the days leading up to the event and a minute's silence was observed for Ray.

The fleets settled down to racing

The day started with a nice top suit NE breeze which allowed the course setter and ARO Mike Clifton to set a windward/ leeward course parallel with the control area, although various shifts during the day led to switching between starboard and port rounding; something that the competitors dealt with in varying degrees of success! Whilst port rounding gave more orderly entry into the mark, the distance from the shore and definite shift on port meant that there were a few turns done at the windward mark. Things were further hampered by the wind going more easterly during the day but as they say, "it's the same for everyone" and the fleets settled down to racing.

A large event always takes a while to get going but by early afternoon all the skippers had completed their seeding races and most were where they expected to be, Derek Priestley and Huub Gillissen being two who were a little shocked to find themselves in the bottom fleet, Derek having retired from his 1st race after being

involved in an incident at the 1st mark and Huub retiring after the finish when informed that he had missed a mark of the course. The seeding race winners were Brad Gibson (42), Pete Stollery (09), Darin Ballington (98), Dave Potter (120) and Simon Clarke (94).

Close competition in unsettled weather

Close racing throughout the fleets over the next three days was a credit to the skills of the skippers. There was some rebuilding of boats during the event but over the 3 days there were very few delays. It must be recorded that the excellent organisation by the host club and the communication between the race team kept everything flowing in some testing weather conditions, particularly on the middle day when the rain and wind combined to make a wet and cold day for all and a big thanks from all the competitors for this.

On the water the wins were being shared out with races 2,3 & 4 going to Peter (09), Dave (120) and Brad (42) it wasn't until race 5 that we had a multiple winner, Brad (42) but then Peter (09) responded with back to back wins in race 6 & 7. Races 8 & 9 were taken by Graham Bantock (95) but after this there were no more back to back victories, with Brad (42), Graham (95), Peter(09), Josh King (26) and Rob Walsh (25) taking wins.

Although those at the top naturally get most of the attention there were some very close races lower down the fleets and many of the heats finished with multiple boats crossing the line within seconds of each other, something that tested the skills of the ladies on the finish line, thank you ladies for allowing us to continue racing all weekend even when you must have been wet and cold yourselves in the finishing tent.





Days 2 and 3

Days 2 & 3 were tricky conditions for all, Sunday for the cold, wind and rain; Monday for the shifty light conditions requiring many course alterations and a different control area.

The top ten positions overall were tight and with such high quality fleets it was going to be a fight to the end to stay there, Peter Stollery had however pulled out a gap to Brad Gibson in 2nd place and by the end of the event was a convincing winner, probably quite fitting then that 12 months after winning the world championship by beating Brad in the last race at West Kirby that the final race was a one-two with Peter again just beating Brad. Graham Bantock showed all his experience and skill to take third a few points ahead of the highest placed "novice" Darin Ballington. Tony Edwards in the newly launched "works" BritPOP! came 5th ahead of Rob Walsh, Chris Harris and John Tushingham. Josh and Greg King showed that the new kids on the block are starting to add race craft to their undoubted skills.

Graham Allen closed the event by thanking all the competitors, helpers and race team and presented the winner's trophy to Peter Stollery.

Hosting an IOM National Championships is a challenge for any club and when you have 73 entries it becomes a very big commitment, the Two Islands RYC, its members and the event race team should be congratulated on an excellent event with a warm welcome, good racing, hospitality and pleasant social evenings.

Pictures: Damian Ackroyd

Results

- 1 Peter Stollery 26pts BritPOP
- 2 Brad Gibson 47pts BritPOP
- 3 Graham Bantock 54pts Fractal
- 4 Darin Ballington 61pts BritPOP
- 5 Tony Edwards 78pts BritPOP

The full results and links to photos and videos of the event can be found via the MYA website
Report thanks to Darin Ballington and Keith Coxon.

