

Cadet Inland Championships incl. Barts Bash at Datchet

The early morning fog on the run up to Datchet was an indication of the light and fickle breezes on offer for the Cadet Class as they arrived for their Inland Championships this weekend.

Over 100 sailors with parents in tow set to work, rigging with excitement but quickly realising that not much was going to happen very soon, perhaps not even at all. Hardly a breath broke the mirrored surface of the reservoir as coffee was consumed and play and chatting, boat-bimbling and plane spotting became the order of the day. Boredom was broken with an app that could tell you where each aircraft was headed, but as time ticked on, there wasn't a zephyr.

RO Arky stayed patient, and kept faith. Finally, late into the afternoon after many may have lost hope for the day the lake filled with ripples. The excellent communication between windward marks, Matt White and Keith Videlo on the pin end enabled the race course to be set quickly, and the race countdown started. Tom Mallandine from the RYA was there to observe adding to the pressure as the event was an indicator for this winter's training.

Inevitably after 5hrs waiting the Cadets were all a bit too keen, Race 1; General Recall 1.

2nd attempt; a great start from Izzy Speirs, Jamie Harris and Cally Terkleson as the fleet headed toward the 1st mark. It was clear that the conditions were testing, fickle, patchy and only just on the edge of being sailable. From the middle of the beat using all the shifts that they could find at the top mark it was Jamie Harris with new crew Toni Wilkinson with a long lead from Ben Warrington and Ollie Mears, Izzy and Emily Speirs and new helm Aqil Jannaty in the top 10. With the wind dropping to 3 knots the wing mark was a place to gain or lose. Izzy Speirs, Hattie and Hamish Collingridge and Megan Ferguson drifting past the unlucky ones through into the mix.

Race 1 shortened course, Jamie Harris takes the win, with Izzy Speirs 2nd and Hattie Collingridge 3rd and Ben Warrington in 4th. Cara Bland and Ines Green excelled to lead Bronze fleet with a stunning 7th place, and Amy and Benjamin Goult 9th as Silver fleet leader.

Race 2.

With a little breeze filling in there were big swings from left to right but at 5:25pm a very long line was set to a very short beat. The drag race to the top mark was a sign that the wind had swung too far left as boats from the pin, having spotted the shift, started to reach into the top mark; race abandoned frustratingly for Ben Warrington who lead by a mile....

Race2. Sunday

Sunday dawned with a foggy start but a far more positive forecast than Saturday.

With a force 2 to 3 settled and the low moody cloud cresting the turrets of Windsor Castle race 2 could finally get underway at 11:30am.

From the middle of the start line, Maisie Harkess and Annabel Hitchmough had an early lead. Ellie Wootton turned her boat "Zest" around and from halfway up the first beat hoisted her kite and returned to the start line fearing as OCS. Jamie Harris crossed the fleet from the right to consolidate with Alex and George Colquitt, Anna Morgan, Ben Barr, Toby Slump and Maisie Harkess close behind.

At the 2nd windward, Alex Colquitt lead from Jamie Harris and Ryan Wilkinson who was back into the mix after a poor start. Megan Ferguson, Erin Marks and Finbarr Wormwell were having a great race in the top 10. At the finish after a very shifty race and 2 Charlie flags, the results:

Jamie Harris 1st, Alex Colquitt 2nd, Anna Morgan 3rd. Ellie Wootton made the most amazing comeback to finish 12th. Stars of the future Amy and Benjamin Goult finished with a very good 11th and Finbarr Wormwell and Oscar Ferenczy 13th.

Race 3

After another general recall and long delay, and with the plane spotters app keeping us amused, Race 3 began. At the top it was Anna Morgan by a country mile from Megan Ferguson, Ellie Wootton, and Izzy Speirs. Jamie Harris made such a good start that he couldn't believe it and set off back to the line to avoid an OCS and started right at the back.

On the 2nd beat, a battle between Anna and Ellie left the door open for Megan who took the shifts on her own to lead by a minute with Toby Slump, Ellie Wootton and Ben Barr chasing. Into the last beat Megan lead from Ellie, Anna and Izzy but now with Alex Colquitt and Hattie Collingridge chasing hard, as indeed was Jamie Harris who was "on a mission". At the finish it was Megan Ferguson from Jamie Harris and Ellie Wootton. Bettine Harris and Anna Horackova showed true promise as the first silver fleet in 10th and Cara Bland again doing superbly with 13th.

Race 4

A quick turnaround saw race 4 quickly underway, but again another black flag followed by a big left shift held up proceedings. The wind by now was very light and bordered on the minimum but it was just about stable enough to race.

Amy Goult flew up the first beat with, Ryan Wilkinson and Hattie Collingridge close behind, but the zephyr faded and returned from the left hand side of the course, as they settled onto the run to the finish, it was another bullet for Megan, with Jamie 2nd and Ellie 3rd. Tom Bridge and William Cowley were the leading the future legends in an awesome 8th place, with Erin Marks 10th as leading silver.

Race 5

Lighter, darker cooler, we couldn't believe that we would get to race 5. With the discard coming into play the title was already decided as the final race started under a black flag to match the clouds.

A text book pin end start from Bea Green and Clara Simpson matched that of Jamie Harris and also, again, Maisie Harkess. A tiny header and Bea tacked to cross the fleet with Jamie, edging into the lead from Alex, Hattie, Erin and Aqil. Also having a great first beat were Harry and Alice Folkard, Harry and Faye Chatterton, and Bettine. Taking advantage of her excellent opportunity, Bea Green stayed at the front with the experts all the way around, a race I hope that she never forgets. In the pack some bumping and barging at the leeward mark saw Lia Fletcher and Francesca Mann quite unfairly shoved into almost last from a place in the teens. I think some time with Dad and a rule book would be a good idea ready for next time out....

At the finish to take the title, Jamie Harris led from Alex Colquitt, Hattie Collingridge, and star performance of the day with the biggest cheer, Bea Green, who showed what a good start can do. Also in the top 10 and with a great last race Erin Marks with Tyghe Brown, and Aqil with William Seabrook.

Some protests needed to be settled before a late prize giving presented by our excellent chairman Howard, and a thankyou speech to all those who helped run the event and to the excellent Datchet for assisting the event.

Final results available online.