

## Vane A Championship 2019 - Fleetwood

The final two days racing.

Thursday found the wind back in the north west, blowing across the Irish Sea and towards the club. Initially it was lighter again, and boats began the day in light wind suits. At times it was possible to lay the finishing line in one on starboard tack. Our boats again had mixed days, but Peter and Paul fared better, climbing into a clear third place overall. Graham Butler's 'Dignity' continued to stay some seven points clear of Shaun, Graham and Ray, who sailed well as the wind increased to keep within striking distance for the final day.

Vane racing at this standard can generate intense competition. Friday dawned with light, variable reach-y winds, which increased during the day. Initially boats were once again in light wind rigs, and spinnaker setting was challenging. At last Dignity's run of success started to falter. Graham, Shaun and Ray capitalised by getting the very best out of their boat and the conditions, rising to within only two points of the leader. In a dramatic quirk of fate, the final heat of the week was drawn between the first and second boats. Graham, Shaun and Ray had hauled Dignity's lead in, to the point where the overall points lead would be decided on the final spinnaker run. It was such a close race that at times each boat was ahead, but by the line Dignity took the championship by just those two points. Peter and Paul also sailed very well on the last day, cementing their third place overall. Lewis, Russell and Thomas, racing as a team in their first event at Fleetwood, struggled with the fluky conditions on the final day, but finished in equal twelfth place in a batch of four hot boats with very close points.

It was an eventful week, with varying wind strengths and directions. The standard of sailing was extremely high, the fleet including past champions in both vane and radio sailing. Our three crews acquitted themselves well, demonstrating the value of regular club racing at the home club. Next year's Vane A Championship will again be held at Gosport. For club members who might be attracted by the thought of becoming part of such an amazing and historic event, whether competing or helping to run the racing, you will be sure of a very warm welcome from the Gosport fleet.

Mervyn