

Saturday 18th March Multi Hull Racing

In the pre-race day message I wrote *'The weather does not look too promising at present but you never know the elements may be on our side and we will have a good day's racing'*. The elements were not exactly on our side but it was a great day's racing living up to the strap line of *F*_{ast}, *F*_{un}, *F*_{antastic!} Craft and skippers were tested thoroughly as due to the increasingly gusty wind conditions rigs had to be changed down and most, possibly all, boats capsized more than once! There were some spectacular reaches where spray flew as the boats lifted and virtually took off diagonally across the lake.

Nine boats came to the line, although it would have been 10 but one had serious gear failure before racing started. There was a fairly even division between cats and tris. Differences were apparent in the fin/foil designs. Mike Dann had the only fully foiling boat, a *Ghost Train*, fitted with J foils which clearly worked to lift the hulls. Sadly however, he started on his smallest rig, a number 3, and couldn't change down as the wind increased, making handling more tricky as the wind increased! Many of the rest of the fleet had angled fins with foiling capacity. Mike Cooke was particularly successful at driving his boat at impressive speed, but even he had several capsizes.

Ten races were held before the wind strength made it prudent to stop. Mike Cooke was the overall winner hitting number 1 spot in 9 of the 10 races. Sailing superbly, he was often very quickly in the lead and simply drew away from most of the fleet. Second, third and fourth places were closely contested. Mervyn Cook sailing his cat was second on count back with three second places and two thirds. Peter Fothergill was third with two seconds and two thirds. Although Mike Dann gained a first place, two seconds and two thirds he lost out because he was unable to finish the last two races. Completing the course was a difficulty for the rest of the fleet. Several had real tussles to keep their boats on track. Paul Edwards showed his mettle with two seconds and a third place but could not avoid the capsizes that affected his overall position. Bob Pearson showed great form with a second and a third place, then had to leave after four races. Three others also only completed four races: Alex Corey had a number of mechanical problems but gained two third places; Simon Walley had a mixed day but showed a good turn of speed especially on the down wind legs. Finally, Alan Storey persisted even in the face of multiple capsizes. He also commented that his boat had a proclivity to hug buoys! At times it was clearly difficult to get boats to tack and there were a number of collisions.

However, it was, overall, excellent practice for our next racing slot, **the open meeting on the 1st and 2nd of April**. Once again the competition was good natured and skippers did their turns where appropriate. I was interested to note that they were concentrating so hard on keeping their boats at maximum velocity that virtually all the fleet forgot about the change of course after the coffee break and had to back track.....

Thank you to everyone who helped with buoys, courses, the dinghy etc.

See you on the 1st of April.

Jacque Cook

Class Captain