

Vane 36 points series, last race, November 18th.

Eight boats turned out for this the last race of the series - fifteen skippers and mates! The forecast was gloomy: cold, with rain but a wonderful moderate breeze, almost straight down the lake from the west south west. But enthusiasm was high, especially as there was a close finish to the points series points trophy, so today's points did mean prizes!

It was indeed rainy, not so bad for the competitors who kept fairly warm by running about, but uncomfortably cold for the race team, Jacque, Julie and Eileen. They did a great job and were essential as there were, as so often in this competitive fleet, some whisker-close finishes.

Racing started in a little less wind than expected, so most boats carried a No 1 rig. Shaun, mated by youngest son Thomas, started well, winning their first three boards with some excellent poling from Thomas. They were sailing their Hollom designed 36. Lewis and Russell, sailing a reserve boat, also started well but lost out to Peter and Paul's Sybora in the second heats. By the start of the third heats it was becoming clear that changing down would be advantageous, and the third set of downwind boards were very exciting, with boats nose-diving, and broaching in the squalls. Pete Lawley and Jay Britton demonstrated that if their boat was well trimmed, submarining didn't slow it down much. Very impressive! Also notable was Alex Kennaby's boat, which was showing real turns of speed down-wind, seeming to turn the gusts into instant acceleration.

A short lunch-break at 12.30 allowed the fleet to warm up, and racing started again with two and a half heats to do. The Mike Dann designed Diversion of Mervyn and Eric, and Graham and Ray's Hollom designed boat were steadily notching up points. Once the second rigs were set, The Diversion seemed to relish the choppy water, although there were still some very close finishes, particularly against Shaun and Thomas on the run, who only lost out by inches. It was noticeable that the standards of boat handling were very high, with the less experienced younger mates, Russell, Jay and Thomas, coping really well in the stronger breeze and making some excellent re-trims. The same couldn't be said of all the older generation, however, with skipper Mervyn committing a comic blue within two feet of the finishing line, much to the amusement of all. This let Graham and Ray, who had been very close but on the south side of the lake, through to deservedly win the beat.

After seven heats, Mervyn and Eric had won, dropping only 'those' three points. Graham and Ray finished a close second, only four points behind. Peter and Paul's Sybora struggled a little as the wind increased, but came in third, only three points behind Graham. Fourth were Lewis and Russell with 20 points, fifth Shaun and Thomas with a solid 18, sixth Pete and Jay with 10 points. Alex, mated in the second half by Lester, won two runs and scored 4 points to come seventh, and Anthony and Lester, struggling with a boat which just didn't want to perform, and well under par for them, came eighth with 3 points.

On the aggregate of the windward legs, Mervyn and Eric tied with Graham and Ray with 18 points, and downwind Mervyn and Eric led by four points over Graham and Ray, who tied with Peter and Paul. The day had provided some exciting sailing, with the boats demonstrating just how well a modern 36 can cope with a good breeze and choppy water. The next vane sailing is for A's, scheduled on Sunday the 3rd of December. The very last event of the season is on Saturday 16th December for 36's racing for the Mick Thomas Trophy.

Look forward to seeing you on the water.

Mervyn Cook Vane Class Captain