

The Return of The Blackwater Gauntlet Trophy



Sonata Match Race Challenge at Dabchicks, 17th & 18th July 2010



Six local Sonatas competed, with each boat racing every other to decide the winner. Each match was observed by one of two Umpires (International Judges Alf Bell and Peter Fitt). The Saturday was a practise day to make sure the competitors were familiar with the format, as few had match raced before. After the morning briefing the teams headed out to the boats to rig their number two jibs for a breezy afternoon of practise matches in a force five.

The wind wasn't ideal for attempting the close tactical manoeuvres of the pre-start but all were determined to conquer the conditions and their opponent.

Many learned some harsh lessons and all came ashore for the debrief in the bar to discuss how they could improve for the next day.



The wind eased slightly for the event proper on Sunday morning, so the boats were prepared with full size genoas for the round robin races.

It started early at 10am as there were at least fifteen races to get through. With the windward/leeward course set square to the wind, the racing began. As each pair of boats entered the start box they were tracked by the buzzing umpires, flags and whistles at the ready.

One spectator likened the pre-start manoeuvres to a Sonata mating dance, but for the competitors it was quite the opposite. The teams needed to keep their wits about them, especially when matched against the assertive 'Aubie Too' (8922N).

The Race Committee did an excellent job with an efficient turnaround between matches and an excellently laid course. Each race lasted about twenty minutes, and with little time between flights to hang around before you were off again. There were several protests called for, and a few penalties given.



As the racing progressed through the flights a clear winner emerged, 'Camel' 8090N was invincible. The racing was completed by 2pm with enough time to return to the bar for the prize giving where the teams swapped stories that will be re-told through dark winter nights.

Results:



- 1st Camel (8090N)
- 2nd The Apprentice (8093N)
- 3rd Aubie Too (8922N)
- 4th Ghostbuster (8141N)
- 5th Parody (8161N)
- 6th Kehaar (8214N)



It was made successful by all who took part.



Many thanks to:

The Umpires, Peter Fitt and Alf Bell
Tree Fitt for making the Match Racing flags
Lorraine Cope and her Race Committee
Pete Bessy for the loan of his fishing boat and Joe Billings for driving it
Ollie Jarvis, Dave Tough and the Mark Layers
Leanne Goody, Paul Cowell and John Fisher for taking the Photos
and all the teams in Sonatas

With calls for more Sonata Match Racing next year, watch this space...

Report by Rachel Ramsay