

Report by Andrew Dean

All we asked for was a change of wind conditions from last week, when very light winds gave very awkward sailing conditions. And, goodness me, were the wishes answered, with a gale warning in force for the North Irish Sea and a gust at Ronaldsway of 37 knots recorded at 1pm, well in to strong gale territory. Clearly the forecast discouraged attendance this week, with just 8 boats rather than the 15 of last week. Although westerly winds are heavily attenuated at Injebreck, there were many severe gusts to catch the unwary, and indeed the experienced, as we shall see. Jim Whitelegg launched his two-sail Gull only to think better of it and return to the slipway, opining that it was "swimming weather".

The remaining 7 boats lined up for the start with an excellent course, set by Commodore Keith Poole, giving a bit of a beat from the off. Although there was plenty of bunching at the first mark, the fleet set off in pursuit of Ralph Kee (Laser), who proceeded to disappear into the distance. There was one capsized, by your experienced correspondent (D-Zero Blue), close to the finish, which cost a few places. The incident was due to a sudden strong gust with a 90-degree veer, but, being upwind, recovery was reasonably swift, since his dinghy, rather than "turn turtle" (upside down), flopped onto its side, and he was able to scramble on to the centre-plate. The upshot was that, although, still finishing 3rd on the water, on handicap correction, he finished 6th, 3 seconds behind Ralph Kee in the Laser. Race honours were claimed by Peter Cope, one of our truly gifted junior sailors. Dave Batchelor was second (even though he was a late starter!) ahead of Mike Pridham (Laser Radial) and Donald Edwards (Laser) in 4th. Just 67 seconds separated 2nd and 6th places.

The wind seemed to increase for the second race; indeed the reduced elapsed times for the 3 laps bear this out. Ralph had a great race to claim 1st by 7 seconds from Donald who was 20 seconds ahead of your correspondent. 4th was Mike just 10 seconds ahead of Peter, and Batch and Jerry Colman (Finn) settling for the remaining places, having fallen into "holes" in the wind, therefore having to watch the chance of a good result fade into the distance. The gusts were beefy enough, however, to cause two further capsizes in the second race. Donald fell in putting in a gybe with the kicker on just before a huge gust. Also Mike had a similar downwind tumble on the penultimate leg to compromise his race, but like Donald made a quick recovery, often not easy with a roll. There wasn't time to laugh in sympathy, since the racing was intense and good fun.

So half-way through the series we have junior Peter Cope leading from Batch, Mike and Donald. It's all to sail for.

Thanks to Keith Poole for officiating and the patrol boat crew (Helen Kee and Tim Cope) for their highly appreciated assistance. Full results and photos will be found on MS&CC's Facebook page.



Just after the first start.