

Report by Andrew Dean, from the back of the fleet

Despite there being force 5 or 6 winds forecast for the Irish Sea, there were calm patches at West Baldwin reservoir when the fleet arrived to rig the dinghies on Sunday. Unfortunately the wind failed to fill in during the morning, A healthy fleet of 16 boats launched consisting of 3 RS Aero7's, 4 Laser radials, 2 Finns, 2 Aero 5's, 2 D Zero blue rig and one each Laser standard, Enterprise and father-of-the-fleet Jim Whitelegg's Gull. Quite a variety to watch.

The course for both races was 1, 4 to 5 giving a beat and run and little in the way of reaching with the wind across the boats. There were premature starters, who were required to go back to re-start, and much congestion on the short first leg, but little in the way of voiced disagreement. Just one collision occurred when the culprit performed their penalty turn, and could continue without recourse to a steward's enquiry. The leading bunch consisted of Jerry Colman's Finn, Peter Cope's Aero 7, Dave Batchelor's Aero 7 and Joe and Eric's Enterprise (the only 2-manned dinghy), finishing in that order, but on corrected time the Enterprise disturbed that order by being promoted to 3rd and Teddy Dunn's Aero 5 promoted into 4th. Jerry secured victory by just 18 seconds.

The second race featured rain and even less wind, despite the forecast, and included some poor decision-making by some who chose to try to sneak up the west bank. Again Jerry led the fleet with Peter second finisher ahead of Dave Batchelor, these two changing places many times, but it was the 4th finisher Ralph Kee in the standard Laser who took victory this time just 4 seconds ahead of Peter with Jerry securing 3rd 18 seconds back and Dave Batchelor 4th just 8 seconds in arrears. Teddy was 5th and Keith Holden (Finn) had a fine race in 6th. Over half a century of age separates these two which shows something but I'm not sure what.

After 4 races Teddy leads the series from Batch with Simon Pressley (Laser radial) holding 3rd one point ahead of Jerry. On Boxing Day is the Frostbite Regatta which is a one-off pursuit race at 1100hrs, ending at 12.00 hrs so the series will therefore be decided next Sunday, weather permitting of course.

Thanks to Keith Poole for race officer duty, and the Patrol boat crew of Andy Dunn and Commodore May Shiu Chan. Thanks also are due to sponsors Watling Streetworks, supporting sailing in our lovely island.