

Most of the Island's population will have been aware that February has been an exceptionally windy month. It may come as a bit of a surprise to many that there has been dinghy racing for the Watling Streetworks series on West Baldwin reservoir.

February series got off to a windy start, so much so that only three took to the water. After quite a lot of swimming Bob Love took the win both on the water and after correction.

The second weekend, as previously reported in the Courier was almost spoiled by the continual heavy rain. Very strong wind/gusts cancelled the following weekend.

For the final Sunday, with only three races completed five boats raised their sails, with four taking to the water. First sail up was the Finn of Jerry Colman, this seems to have been the nudge that the other four competitors needed to rig and set sail.

Apparently Jerry was only checking that the new line to pull the sail up was correct, and had no intention to go racing!

With everything to lose February series leader Ralph Kee (Laser) led the fleet to the first mark ahead of Dave Batchelor (Aero 7) who was a little slow after having to make a tactical dismount just after the start.

After an exceptionally fast blast to the downwind a 'school boy' error put Ralph in the lake gifting the lead to Dave and allowing the other competitors, Bob Love (Radial) and Andrew Dean (Devoti Blue) to make up a lot of ground. On this day at least, Dave's Aero 7 was fairly evenly matched against Ralph Kee's Laser, the Aero faster off wind, the Laser having the edge up wind.

The breakthrough came when, out on his own, Dave managed to hit a mark, doing his penalty turn allowed Ralph to make up some time. Although Dave was first to cross the line, 20 seconds lead was not enough with the win going to Ralph on correction. In third place behind Dave was Bob by only 11 seconds, Andrew 4th.

For race 2 over the same course, Ralph and Dave were very evenly matched with the lead changing regularly, and with no major mishaps pulled well clear of the other boats.

In reverse of the first race Ralph was first to the line with Dave second to take the win on the water and correction. Andrew finished ahead of Bob on the water after a particularly messy capsize, but not quite far enough with third place going to Bob.

Many thanks to patrol crew Peter Hoosen-Owen and James Bishop, race officer Keith Poole and to our sponsor Doug Watling. For full results see the MS&CC website and Facebook page.