

Write up by Jerry Colman

Attendance at the dinghy park at Injebreck on Sunday morning was a bit thinner than usual as might have been expected with a forecast windspeed of 30 knots and gusting over 40 from the South with rain. However, it didn't look too bad on the water before the start although your correspondent did mention to Dave Batchelor (Supernova) that it looked a bit worse at the top of the lake when driving past on the way from Ramsey. Batch was just putting his mast back up after wisely lowering it for Tuesday's Storm Bram and we started to convince each other that it would be ok.

Soon, the RS Tera sailors (juniors) appeared and without much hesitation began rigging their boats. Keith Poole from the starting station reported a single gusts up to 25 knots but most gusts ranging in the high teens, which didn't seem that bad but then he was ashore where the bushes and trees can provide for some attenuation of the windspeed, which was forecast to increase a bit as well.

Next up was the Patrol boat crew, May Shiu Chan and Marius Maska. May took one look and said they weren't going out unless they had a crewman able to go into the water and since they were both wearing oilies and lifejackets it would have to be one of us. Observing the next sequence of gusts hurtling up the lake and noting that I had a drysuit and a buoyancy aid on I volunteered for the job, so leaving the Finn with its rather large sail safely ashore.

Four boats eventually set out, Batch in the Supernova, Tom Watterson in the RS Aero 7, Jimmy Cope in the Tera Pro and Charlie Watterson in the Tera Sport. As the 5-minute countdown to the start ticked away, conditions seemed to get a little wilder and with about 30 seconds to go the Supernova capsized right on the start line, creating an obstruction which the rest had to dodge on their approaches. The boat was up again quickly and without assistance but the RS Aero had made its usual well-timed start and was nearly at the first mark before Batch got over the start line, just a little way behind the Teras, one of which (Charlie's) briefly gave him a dip but again was quickly righted and continued to race.

The downwind leg went all the way up the lake, some very high speeds were seen with accompanying whooping and hollering. Finding a calmer spot to put the gybe in kept the sailors watching the water and the first run went well. The next leg, across the top of the lake caught Watterson and Batchelor out partly due to the boom hitting the water as the boats heeled, preventing the sail from being let out and resulting in a knock down. Again, both recovered quickly from their capsize without our assistance but the Aero was up quicker than the Supernova, so Watterson moved well into the lead, a lap in front of the Supernova.

Starting the second lap, Charlie Watterson's Tera Sport spat him out again and it took him a little while to get it back up again. He did not disagree with our advice that a diversion back to the dinghy park would be his best next step, so he gracefully retired from the race.

Next up we watched Jimmy Cope in the Tera Pro running up the lake with an increasingly violent gust behind him which rapidly drove the bow of the little boat down into the water so the whole thing somersaulted into the water expelling the driver but otherwise doing no harm. It took Jimmy a little while to get this sorted, but he did and then continued to race heading right back up the lake then back to windward through the finish line just after the Aero and the Supernova had finished. The OOD sensibly cancelled the next race as conditions continued to worsen.

So, it was well done to all who sailed in these challenging conditions and special thanks from one of the Patrol boat crew for not requiring anyone to leap into the water to assist.

Thanks to the Patrol Boat crew, OOD Keith Poole and his bridge team and of course to our sponsor Watling Streetworks. See y'all next week. Weather looking much better for now.