

A light to moderate, pleasantly warm south-westerly wind and some stunning Manx snowy hill scenery greeted the eight boats for this the second day's racing of the Watling Streetworks Spring Series on Baldwin reservoir.

The port course saw the fleet rounding marks 1, 3 and 5 before tacking back to the start / finish line. This gave us a beat off the start, then a beam reach across the lake, a run back up to no 5 and finally another beat to the line, repeated until the Race Officer decided that enough was enough. Pretty well every leg and also every mark provided challenges and opportunities to move ahead (or get left behind).

The first beat off the start line was critical as the bunching of the fleet at mark 1 could set latecomers back several boat lengths. The faster boats, Dave Batchelor's Aero 7, Jerry Colman's Finn and Ralph Kee's Laser Standard tended to make the mark a bit sooner than the rest and get a little way ahead giving us time and opportunity to spot the gusts, lulls and shifts up the next legs. Kee also showed his racing skills when the Finn looked like passing to windward – never let another boat through your wind – and only lost position on the beats when the boats split tacks. However the tactics worked and Kee held off the Finn and the Aero in the first race, slowing them enough to take the race and let Andrew Dean in his Laser Radial through into second place. Simon Pressly and James Penn (Laser Radials), Jim Whiteleg (Gull) and Tom Watterson (Tera) fell into more lulls than the rest and hence were a little way back but overall the results were very close indeed with all finishing well within 5 minutes on corrected time and Batchelor beating Pressly by just one second for 4th place behind the Finn.

The second race saw three over the line at the start such was the enthusiasm but all returned. Karma and a lucky little pulse of pressure saw the offending Finn third around mark 1 with Kee and Batchelor ahead. Three laps later the Finn had moved to the front of the fleet but was she far enough ahead to manage the very demanding handicap placed on the boat? Despite being an old and heavy design they're sailed by some of the world's best sailors which results in the handicap getting worse. So no it wasn't so Kee also took the second race (and now leads the series) with Simon Pressly sneaking into second place by just one second ahead of the Finn. That's close. Indeed the first 6 boats in this race finished within 40 seconds on corrected time so it's not justifiable to moan too much (or indeed at all) about the handicaps.

It was a really enjoyable morning's sailing so many thanks are due to Peter Hoosen-Owen and crew in the patrol boat and to Keith Poole for being the officer of the day again.

This weekend was in contrast to the previous one, wind, a cold mostly north westerly enabled the race officer to set a course using only two marks. One at each end of the lake both windward!

First win of the March series, and a first in their new Enterprise was Joe & Eric Whitelegg, Simon Pressly (Radial) second and Ralph Kee (Laser) third.

The breeze improved during the run up to race two, but was frightened away by the start hooter. It was Dave Batchelor (Aero 7) made the best of the mush, followed again in second and third by the Lasers of Simon and Ralph.

Many thanks to Jade Leech and Helen Kee for patrol boat and of course to our generous sponsors Watling Streetworks. Full results and photos on the club website and FB.