

Manx Sailing and Cruising Club

Watling Streetworks Injebreck January Series Race 3, 14th Jan 2024

Capsize Drill.

Write up by Jerry Colman

The MS&CC's January Series at Injebreck continued on Sunday in brilliant sunshine again but this time with a cold and gusty Northerly wind that proved very challenging for all the competitors. The usual gathering at the gate expressed serious doubts as to whether it was fit to go as we observed the black line gusts coursing down the lake albeit with more gentle periods in between. The forecast said it was due to increase and Ronaldsway was already reporting gusts over 20 knots. Sound effects from the trees added to the concerns and it looked like a cancellation was in the offing until Peter and Max Cope pitched up and took the cover off the Laser 2000. A slight increase in the durations of the lulls between gusts together with mutterings from the older attendees about the conditions we used to sail in up here saw a fleet of 6 dinghies set sail heading up the lake towards the start line. Your correspondent had of course prepared the Finn for the fray but was interrupted by Yogi Quayle on the patrol boat requesting a crew who could enter the water if necessary so Colman reluctantly obliged after tying the Finn back down again in the now increasingly fierce gusts.

Simon Cain in the RS Aero 7 was first to pull out having struggled through the first few gusts and not made much progress up the lake. Bob Love in his RS Aero 7 called it next after I think 2 or 3 capsizes including one on the start line one minute before the gun. Not the ideal approach to the start. Tom Watterson and Will Osbourn in RS Aero 5s had both taken dips by the start or very soon after. It became clear that the gusts at the top end of the lake were heavier and shifted more violently in direction than down by the dinghy park. Also in a cold Northerly the denser air tends to fall down Carraghan onto the lake increasing its speed above forecast levels and hitting the water at a considerable downward angle so that as the boat heels the sail area exposed to the wind increases and the capsize becomes more difficult to avoid. On many boats even a fairly moderate heel angle can result in the boom trailing in the water when you let the sheet go which prevents it from being let out to spill the wind any more so by then its time for the more nimble amongst us to hop over the side onto the centreboard and begin the righting procedure.

The Patrol boat was kept busy from the start standing by sometimes multiple capsizes and on one occasion Andrew Dean's Laser Radial in the tree next to the start position but it must be emphasised that on no occasion did we actually have to assist anyone and your correspondent was at no time in much danger of having to jump in. The water in the lake is much colder than the sea.

Keith Poole set a windward / leeward course with marks 6 and 2 to be left to port and the start mark to starboard. All the remaining 4 boats capsized at least twice during the race including the Copes in the Laser 2000 who impressed mightily by flying their blue spinnaker on the long downwind legs. Andrew Dean (Father of the Fleet by some margin) also showed his grit and mastery of the Laser Radial in some style by completing the race despite spending a fair bit of time underwater.

The kite put the 2000 into the lead on the water. The Copes flew down to mark 1, rounded it and headed back upwind for the start line. Rather like the little flock of sheep on the bank the other 3 followed them round ignoring shouts from the patrol boat that they should have gone a bit further

down the lake and rounded mark 2. They got it right next time round when the now retired Bob Love advised them of the error of their ways from the adjacent bank so in effect the first actual lap took rather longer than it needed to. It should not be so hard to remember just 2 marks of the course or whether to go round leaving them to port or that if you hit one you have to do a round turn or in the case of the finish mark you have to re-round it. No names of course.

The results saw another win for the Copes who now lead the series with Dave Batchelor 2nd, the Whiteleggs and Colman equal 3rd and Dean 5th. All to play for at least amongst the minor places. Full results and pictures on the MS&CC website and FB.

On consideration of the allegedly worsening conditions, the cold and the tiredness of the very wet competitors Keith decided to cut the second race and there were no objections. The conditions of course improved thereafter. Thanks to Keith for toughing it out, the patrol boat crew and our sponsor Doug Watling of Watling Streetworks.