



Craftinsure Topper National Series Event 2

Derwent Reservoir Sailing Club

20th & 21st June 2009



Over 200 Topper sailors took their parents, guardians and friends to the northern venue of Derwent Reservoir Sailing Club over the weekend of 20th/21st June 2009 to take part in the second of the Craftinsure sponsored Topper National series.

The scene that everyone was greeted by on the Saturday morning was extremely organised with the now famous and seemingly ever increasing Motorhome Village that was set up amongst the tents in the large camping field to the rear of the site.

Toppers were being rigged adjacent to the car park with trailers neatly stored alongside and yet there was still more than sufficient room in the car park for many more cars – it's an impressive facility at DRSC.

The warmth of the day was surpassed by the warmth of the welcome that was evident whenever we met with the local team of volunteers, this makes everyone's weekend that much more enjoyable and is just what is needed after a long journey. With sailors arriving from all over the UK, North, South, East and West this welcome was much appreciated.

The first (and only) disaster came at the 10:30 briefing when a brave local spoke to the crowd to mention that the site had no mobile signal – the kids were aghast – no mobile, no texting, no surfing – wot shaal wuh dee!! (Geordie speak) – the kids just got on and chatted organically (not digitally) instead. The weather was forecast to be windy with rain and it has to be noted that there were at least three confident yet totally opposite forecasts and it was possible that anything from 6 mph to 20+ mph could arrive on Saturday with universal agreement about lighter airs on Sunday.

ITCA (GBR) Class Chairman Charles Glover welcomed the 200+ entrants explaining that the last time this event was held at DRSC it attracted 68 entries, testament to the strength of the Topper Class currently. Charles went on to remind the kids that it was Fathers Day the following day at which point a more mature member of the crowd suggested that it should start on the Saturday evening – about 7:30pm in the bar would be good!! As the forecast was uncertain the sailors were told to prepare for 4 races back to back on Saturday so food and drink would be needed on the water, there would also be a 10:00 1st race on Sunday to take advantage of the early breeze that was forecast to fade.

Principal Race Officer (PRO) Henry Wright asked the sailors to demonstrate their sailing skills by having good start line behaviour, too many practise line-ups would lead to the black flag, may prevent the ability to get all the races in and may spoil the weekend.

Nigel Vick, our RYA appointed Topper Class Judge reminded all that sailing is a self policing sport so take the on the water penalty where necessary – do your spins. No Spinning = bad sportsmanship which may lead to an expensive Rule 2 – non discardable DSQ – he would also be watching for Rule 42 “pumping” infringements and waving flags at those that needed to do penalty turns.

On cue, just after the briefing it started to rain, quite heavily for a time yet the signal to go on the water sounded and 200 Toppers set off from the shore at 11:30 heading towards the dam wall at the far end of the reservoir, it was observed that there are not many inland waters that you can hide 200 Toppers on the water but out of sight of the clubhouse, you can at Derwent. The fleet was split into four with two flights per race giving 100 boats per start, each set of flights would take it in turn to start first or second onto the standard trapezoidal course, the first flight takes the outer loop with the second taking the inner loop.



The rain had gone as Race 1 started in a steady 12mph wind from the West, the first flight needing a General Recall bringing out the Black Flag immediately, a well behaved second attempt and clear start from the second flight, the winners being Michael Beckett and Andrew Bridgman. The wind increased to 20mph from the NW for race 2 which saw an individual recall on flight 1 and a clear start from flight 2, the girls took the spoils with Felicity Foulds and Rheanna Pavey taking the wins – it was noted that one determined sailor lost 26 places whilst taking three attempts to cross the finish line whilst holding their boom in place with a broken gooseneck – an endeavour prize was awarded later.

The wind went back to the west for the rest of the day and stayed around the 19/20mph mark, Race 3 saw the first flight go clear whilst the second flight saw an individual recall and the committee boat was hit causing damage to the carbon fibre pole used for the orange flag, Race 4 saw both clear starts but the committee boat was once again hit by a wayward Topper, the recorders continued taking numbers with no injuries or collateral damage this time. There were further race wins for Will Hackney, Michael Becket got a second but Rheanna Pavey saw great consistency in the windy conditions to take two further wins and the overnight lead.

The sailors sailed the beat back to the clubhouse, this was no mean feat in the conditions and after many hours of sailing, they arrived tired and ready for a rest. It was noted that two of the three 11 year olds and the majority of the nineteen 12 year olds completed 4 races in the tough conditions on Saturday.

The DRSC hospitality kicked in for the evening with a well attended quiz night being held in the bar – nice marketing plan chaps – “we have no change so can you all come to the bar and buy something please” a classic and it seemed to work. Many on the campsite experienced the rain once again as the barbecues seemed to attract a bit of a downpour, an early night was in order as the early start on Sunday loomed.

Sunday was different, the breeze was light just as promised and the fleet set off for the start line in a 5mph wind that was far from steady. The first flight saw an individual recall and one port end flyer

which looked good but then failed to cross the starboard tack boats, this flight managed to finish the course. The second flight saw a 30 degree wind shift in the latter part of the start sequence that resulted in boats over the line, general recall and a clear start followed on the black flag, this flight was finished early by the pin boat at mark 2 to avoid the loss of the race as the wind started to fail. Race 5 wins were recorded by Felicity Foulds and Henry Wetherell, the fleets were sent ashore to await further instructions and an early lunch as it was quite apparent that there was insufficient wind to start the last race. The race committee deliberated over the wind conditions but without a stable strength or direction to warrant launching the fleet it was decided that no more racing would take place, this left the series win for Michael Becket by one point from Felicity Foulds both of whom showed tremendous consistency, Tom Piggott took 3rd from overnight leader Rheanna Pavey. The standard of sailing continues to improve with very impressive techniques shown deep into the fleet, there are far more sailors who are racing properly rather than just sailing well, it is also pleasing to report that five of the ten races were won by female competitors and three of the top six were females.



Roger Mole, Commodore of DRSC started the prize giving by thanking everyone for helping the event go smoothly, he apologised for the lighter airs of Sunday but thanked the fabulous competitors for an event without problems. Rod Daniels of the event sponsors Craftinsure continued the thanks and mentioned the legendary hospitality of the host club that made Craftinsure proud to be a sponsor. With the generous array of prizes and trophies presented it was time for the sailors to depart for home, some long journeys ahead were eased by the early finish.

Next event in the Craftinsure Topper National series is at Parkstone Yacht Club on the weekend of 11th/12th July.