

Severn Comet Open Meeting 2017

Eight visiting helms joined five of the club's Comet sailors for this year's open meeting, however on inspecting the conditions all of the sailors saw a river that was like a mill pond with the odd zephyr to give some encouragement that the wind strength would increase.

Following the competitors briefing by the Race Officer, the helms were split into two flights. As in previous years these flights started simultaneously on two start lines which were the normal club line and a second one that was laid about 200m downstream.



The first race started with flight A on the club line and flight B on the downstream line with Chris Hatton, the current National Champion and local sailor leading flight A followed by Henry Jagers and Stephen Lemmon. Flight B was led by Eddie Pope, followed by John Coppenhall and Scott Waterland. There was no change in placing for Flight A, but the positions of Flight B changed during the race with Eddie Pope winning and Ben Palmer overtaking Scott to finish third. Once the elapsed times of both Flights had been combined, the overall positions for the first race were Chris 1st, Henry 2nd, Stephen 3rd, and Eddie 4th.

After lunch, the start lines for the flights were swapped with Flight B now on the club line. As in the first race Eddie led flight B from the start followed by John and then Ben, however by the end of the race Ben was able to pass John and hold on for 2nd. Flight A was again led from start to finish by Chris with Henry 2nd and Stephen 3rd. During the race the wind speed dropped, with a couple of helms deciding to retire from the race. Once the elapsed times were combined for the second race, Chris was again 1st but with Eddie 2nd, Henry 3rd and Ben 4th.

After a brief stop on shore for refreshments and time for the Race Officer to calculate the provisional race results, the flights were reorganised so that the top half of the fleet raced against each other. However as three helms decided to take part in the final race, the remaining competitors all started together on the club line. After some close calls at the first mark of the course, Stephen Lemmon broke away from the rest followed by Scott and Chris Robinson. Having been held back by the mass of boats at the first mark, Chris Hatton sailed through the fleet to eventually finish 2nd behind Stephen, with John 3rd and Scott 4th.



Once all the helms were off the water and packed away, the presentations, accompanied by tea and cakes, were made to the successful sailors. The Race Officer and the other club members who had helped to organise and run the event either at the start lines, in the safety boats and in the galley were thanked for their work during the event.

The overall winner of this year's Comet Open Meeting was Chris Hatton, with Stephen Lemmon second overall and Henry Jagers third.

Paul Hinde

Comet 844