

Comet Open at Burghfield Sailing Club 21st April 2018

A record twenty-two boats attended Burghfield's Comet Open on Saturday 21st April. This included several competitors who had not sailed at Burghfield or on the Comet Open circuit before. The forecast was for sun and light winds which is what welcomed the competitors when they arrived.

Race 1

Race Officer, Dereck Lovegrove, delayed the start for a few minutes for the wind to settle. The majority of the fleet started at the committee boat end and first to the windward mark were Chris Hatton, Bob Dodds and Izac Dodds. Next round was Henry Jagers, who had started at the extreme pin end of the line and had clear wind all up the beat. These four were very close together at the first mark, but as the race progressed the distance between them increased with no change of places. Towards the end of the race the wind dropped away and the front of the fleet closed up. Eddie Pope caught and passed Henry and came up behind Izac, who in turn was just behind Bob. The Race Officer shortened the course and the finishing order was Chris, Bob, Izac and Eddie. A few minutes later the wind filled in again, which allowed the tail enders to finish. Due to the later start and drop in the wind the racing was running late, so the Race Officer decided to break for an early lunch.



Race 2

At the beginning of race two the sun had disappeared behind cloud, but the wind had strengthened slightly. The fleet watched the starts of the two other fleets sharing the open. The Streakers opted to start at the pin end of the line, whilst the Solos went from the committee boat end, which demonstrated that the wind was quite variable in direction. At the Comet start there was no consensus of opinion and the fleet was spread all along the line. A header just after the start appeared to favour the starters at the committee boat end. However, first to the windward mark was John Coppenthal, who had started at the pin end and had sailed to the extreme left of the course behind one of the islands. His lead was very small and there was a gaggle of boats right behind him on the following run. Unfortunately, he caught a branch around his centreboard which slowed him briefly, which was sufficient for him to be buried among the chasing boats. On the second beat the fleet was led by Ben Palmer, followed by Izac. Izac caught Ben to take the win, while Chris also passed Ben to take second.

Race 3

Race three started immediately after race two. The line was clearly biased to the pin end and Eddie and Henry, who were right on the pin, took the lead up the first beat. They were joined by Bob, and these three pulled away from the rest of the fleet and from each other. A little rain appeared and the wind began to drop. The Race Officer decided against a fourth race, but instead let race three run for an extra lap. Further place changes at the top seemed unlikely, which would give Chris the overall win with Izac in second. However, suddenly everything changed. First Bob caught Henry, which in itself would not change the top positions. However, Eddie then sailed towards the wrong downwind mark and this allowed Bob and Henry to pass him. This put Bob in the lead overall, followed by Chris and Izac. On the last run Eddie caught Henry, who was also caught by boats behind. However, these last-minute changes were insufficient to change the top placings overall.

Chris Robinson

Comet 63 & 867