

Comet Class Open Meeting

Merthyr Tydfil Sailing Club

30th September 2018

Virtually no wind greeted us as we arrived; but we've this before and the forecast was more promising. Seven visitors joined five local Comets at Pontsticill reservoir in the Brecon Beacons National Park. The forecast proved accurate; the drizzly front went through just after 11 am with the cloud base lifting occasionally to reveal the peak of Pen-y-Fan to the North. The wind, as forecast, seemed to have settled to the NNW. So, we set a conventional course with windward start, held the race briefing and launched. Whilst the fleet was preparing the wind was still fluky but, you can only wait so long...



Race 1

At the time of the start there was wind across the majority of the course, however, the limitations of our inland location gave a huge port bias at the time of the zero with everyone crossing the line within a handful of seconds. The beat started gently with significant shifts, but the wind was still filling in as we reached the windward mark and returned on a near dead-run along the reciprocal course. As the fleet gybed around the outer mark towards the second gybe mark at the opposite side of the reservoir there was another lull and a little bunching, but not enough to upset the leaders. By the time they rounded the second downwind mark and hardened up, the fleet was stringing out. Several places changed downwind and there was a little remaining variability in the wind as the beat to pass back through the line began, but the wind had settled to come from the NNW and began increasing. Ben Palmer (Baltic Wharf) came through the line ahead on this first circuit, ahead of Chris Hatton (Bowmoor). But by the completion of the second lap, Chris had closed to within a handful of seconds of Ben. As the third lap concluded Chris had got into clear wind ahead and was followed over the line by Ben and then Bob Dodds (Crawley Mariners).

We then returned to shore for a lunch break.

As the wind had settled into the NNW direction and filled in a little more, the course was altered slightly to add another reach at the bottom of the course and add a fetch back to the line.

Race 2

The fleet were away again in good order and no incidents. This time Chris Hatton completed the first lap just ahead of Ben Palmer. They were followed by Chris Robinson (Burghfield) and Bob Dodds who were close. The course was shortened at 2½ laps, at which point Chris Hatton was clear ahead of Ben Palmer, with Bob Dodds having just nudged ahead of Chris Robinson.

Race 3

The final race was started as the wind continued increasing slightly from the NNW so no further course changes were made. This time the line bias was reduced to the extent that the majority of the fleet chose starboard tack rather than taking advantage of the relatively long line and splitting. This time Chris Hatton completed the first lap well ahead of Bob Dodds with Ben Palmer just astern. At the end of the second lap Chris Hatton was still well ahead but Ben had got about ten seconds ahead of Bob. The final lap arrived with a few "extra power" gusts that caused a couple of capsizes in the middle and tail of the fleet, but no problem at the front: Chris made it a clean sweep of bullets followed by Ben and Bob.

Thanks

Thanks go out to the organisers, caterers and safety boat crew and all who helped at the club on the day and before, even trolley dollies are appreciated on a congested slipway.