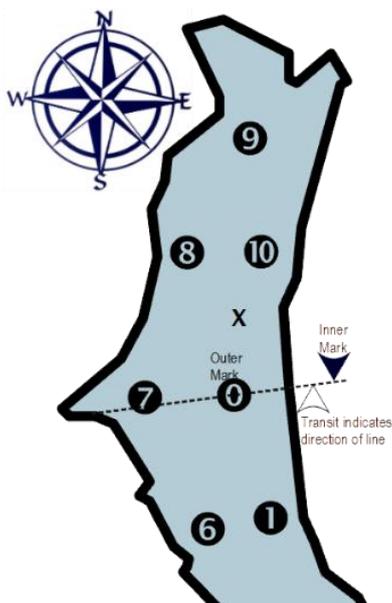


Comet Class Open Meeting

Merthyr Tydfil Sailing Club

5th September 2021

The forecast was for light winds F2, gusting F3 from the southeast veering to south as the day goes on. As is often the case in September we have those lovely autumnal windless mornings. To avoid these, we'd even scheduled the event for May this year – but “other circumstances” got in the way. Here we were with almost no wind, but what there was, was coming from the north-east. Hey, the Brecon Beacons National Park is a lovely place to sail anyway; but can, like many places, be frustrating at times...



Race 1

The wind was light from the north. So, a course was set, 10, 8, 9, 7, OM (← chart) the briefing held and everyone launched. The wind remained light and patchy for the start and first away from the line was Ben Palmer (597, Baltic Wharf SC) ahead of Robert Wookey (165, Merthyr Tydfil SC). Chris Robinson (867, Burghfield SC) and Eddie Pope (377, Ogston SC) started closer to the pin end and were initially slower. Eddie picked up a gust and was on the tail of Robert before halfway to the number 10, windward mark. Ben got there first, about 45 seconds ahead of Eddie and Robert.

Ben also reached the top windward mark, 9, well ahead of Eddie. As they were running down towards no. 7, the wind petered out. Eddie stayed

a little further offshore and managed to sneak past Ben. Meanwhile Robert was swallowed up by the following “peloton” of five boats. Why the lull in the wind? The forecast southerly was filling in, so within seconds Eddie was away “beating” to No. 7; Ben quickly got similar wind and was also away. Eddie and Ben concluded their first lap and Alun Bevan (420, Merthyr Tydfil SC) had managed to break away from the bunch alongside Andrew Brazier (460, Merthyr Tydfil SC). Alun was third around the first lap. Followed by Andrew then Stephen Waldron (426 Merthyr Tydfil SC) and Robert Wookey.

For the second lap the “convergence zone” (i.e. huge awkward patch) of wind was heading north up the reservoir but Eddie stayed clear ahead of Ben. For the conclusion of the second and final lap, Eddie rounded 7 ahead but into a very patchy wind still trying to fill in from the south. Eddie finished first, about one minute behind was Ben, several minutes later Robert got third place just ahead of Alun.

The boats then all returned to shore for a lunch break.

During lunch the wind did fill in “properly” from the forecast southerly direction. The course was reset to be 1, 6, OM, X, 8.

Race 2

The fleet got away with no incidents, but Alun did try a “port flyer” and cleared a couple of boats before having to tack into a wind shadow. Peter Mountford (864, Staunton Harold SC) was ahead after about 30 seconds. This time there was a reasonably constant wind and more of a proper tactical battle to the windward mark, No. 1. But Henry Jagers (800, Beer SC) prevailed ahead of Eddie who was closely followed by Peter. By the time they were heading from X to 8, Eddie had pulled a little further from Peter. As they continued upwind Peter was being chased by Ben. But this order was maintained to the end, Henry first followed closely by Eddie then a short distance back was Peter.

The fleet stayed out on the water to enable a back-to-back race over the same course as the wind was reasonably steady at this time.

Race 3

This time Ben seemed to get away first from the line but there were several boats alongside each other and tacking away upwind. Initially it looked as though Peter may have got ahead. But Eddie tacked below him into a favourable gust and nosed ahead. Eddie had built a lead of ten boat lengths by the time he reached No. 6 and Ben had sneaked into second place very closely followed by Henry and Peter. By the finish Eddie got a considerable way clear of Ben who finished ahead of Peter who was just ahead of Henry.



Congratulations to Eddie for a hard fought and well defended victory.

Thanks

Thanks go out to the organisers, caterers and safety boat crew and all who helped at the club on the day and before in these strange “socially distanced” times.

Mark Govier – injured!