

Comet Open at Silverwing SC

Silverwing SC held their inaugural Comet open meeting on Saturday 10th September. We contested the newly re-purposed 'Comet Trophy'. Originally used as an inter-club Fireball trophy back when Silverwing was British European Airways' works club We think it is part of an old propellor from a de Havilland Heron. It is probably heavy enough to sink a Comet.

12 boats, including 4 from the home fleet of 5, showed up to a gentle North West wind and rather a lot of weed. The weed was somewhat a nuisance, limiting course options for the race officer as a large chunk of the leeward side of the lake being unusable.

Four 40-minute races were planned with one discard, two before and two after lunch, each pair back-to-back.

Race one got away on time, slightly more starboard bias on the line than the RO would have liked, but everyone behaved. The first beats saw an initial good performance by a Silverwing Solo sailor (who shall remain un-named) sailing a borrowed Comet. Unfortunately, in a Solo you can easily tell if you have forgotten to put the transom bung in while sailing – you can see it. Not so in a Comet. I have seen swamped Salcombe Yawls floating lower in the water, but only just! We had the rescue boat escort him back to the slipway just in case.

The lead boat then peeled off after the first lap. The first 3 boats then promptly forgot to use the windward mark of the second beat and headed instead for the gybe mark. They corrected this error without any loss of position.

One or two people struggled with the weed initially, but with a half up rudder and the occasional lifting of the daggerboard if the boat felt dead, the intrepid Comet sailors overcame adversity. Eddie Pope C377 won ahead of Izac Dodds C701 and then local sailor Ken Baker C695 third.



Race 2 started as soon as the last boat was finished and ready. Helen Evans C868 spotted that the wind was starting to shift right as predicted. This had her well placed for most of the first beat. However, shifts and a hole at the windward mark enabled Ken Baker C695 to lead a couple of visitors round in front of her. Ken was able to hold two pursuers off for the first run, and was only pipped into 4th by Ben Palmer C597 on the finish line. Eddie Pope finished first again, followed by Izac Dodds.

After this we convened for lunch. The Comet fleet are a keen bunch. The wind had been steadily shifting to the right so a re-setting of the course was required. They were all on the water and at the start line before the RO even had the chance to go back in and draw the new course on the board! Fortunately, the race team displayed mark numbers for the new course on the back of the committee boat and there was an eager crew in a Jaffa waiting to lead the fleet around.



Race 3 started with the line now biased a bit too much to port. The wind had swung back a bit – such is a race officer's lot! One competitor got a flying start right at the pin, only a



mainsheet width from being over. Izac Dodds was second with Ken Baker in third. Steve Gregory C231 was able to follow the lead bunch in fourth for the first two of the three laps, but ended up dropping to 6th on the last lap.

Race4 started in a little less wind and only 8 competitors. It also saw a change of scene at the front. Ben Palmer C597 led for most of the race, sometimes by quite a big margin, although he was reeled in towards the end by Izac Dodds. Ken Baker C695 was second for the first and most of the second lap but was passed on the penultimate beat by Izac Dodds. Eddie Pope could only manage a fourth, which was to be his discard. With 35 minutes gone the RO decided to finish on two laps as it looked like the wind would die. At which point, the wind filled in nicely! Still there was the consolation of a big Comet chocolate cake and scones for afternoon tea.



Eddie receiving the 'Winners Trophy' – look out for a large motor to drive that prop at the next Open!!

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Adam Wickenden with additions from Ken Baker and Helen Evans.