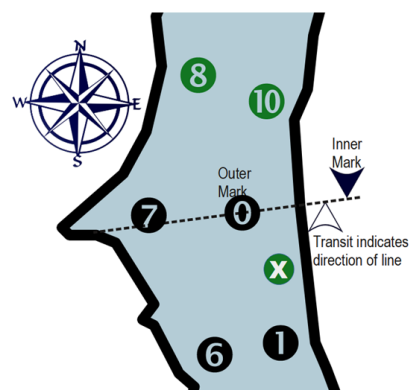


Comet Class Open Meeting Merthyr Tydfil Sailing Club 3rd September 2023

The forecast was for very light winds turning from the north to the south with bright conditions. When I arrived at the club, there was near zero wind in places on the reservoir. I wasn't too worried as we had over three hours until we were scheduled to brief and race. We had a small turnout for our event with just seven entrants this year including three visitors; maybe the light winds forecast has kept people away; but after such a washout summer we were hoping for more. However, for those who came and took part, we enjoyed slow motion "nip and tuck" racing and one sequence of capsizes by myself, maybe I just had to cool down.

Race 1

The wind had filled in at about F1, maybe 2 if you were optimistic, from the south. A short course was set with X placed as a short windward mark, rounded to starboard then running back through the line, keeping the outer mark to port and on towards 8 and across to 10 and back. (β see chart). The briefing held and everyone launched.



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The wind remained fair for the start and first away from the line was Alun Bevan (694, Merthyr Tydfil SC), he soon tacked away on port while Peter Mountford (864, Staunton Harold SC) and others stayed on starboard tack for a little longer. Alun was off down the run, but as is the way in light and variable winds, was soon caught up. Ben Palmer (597, Baltic Wharf SC) slipped away clear of the rest on the reach/fetch leg and stayed out front. On the second lap, the only micro-drama was Alun just clipping the downwind mark and then struggling to complete his penalty turn. Peter and Chris Robinson (867, Burghfield SC) battled it out for second and third, with Peter securing second at the line.

After lunch the course was reset to be X, 8, 10, Line (8 moved up slightly and the outer mark dropped on the run back down). This gave a course with possibly other options for downwind overtaking and a "freer" fetch/reach.

Race 2

The wind virtually died as the start sequence began. This time Alun Bevan got away from the line first (about four minutes after the start signal) and rounded the X mark first, but the wind was filling in a little and similarly to the first race he was caught by the following boats heading downwind. This time Peter caught him and slid past, and Chris was close behind. On the second downwind leg, Peter was clear



ahead, but Alun didn't leave enough room for Mark Govier (667, Merthyr Tydfil SC) to gybe and dropped back doing his penalty turns, allowing Chris to secure second place in this race but only just holding off Ben with a sequence of strategic cover tacks (in relative slow motion) right before the line.

The fleet stayed out on the water to enable a back-to-back race over the same course.

Race 3

The wind had filled in just a little better (at the start at least). Ben had a great start, clearing the fleet and staying there over the two laps. But it was all happening behind, Alun had been in second, but was overtaken by both Chris and Peter on the beat back towards the line, Chris now in second place. On the second run down, there was a "reforming" of the chasing (if it can be called "chasing") fleet, after rounding the gybe mark, Mark Govier (667, Merthyr Tydfil SC) immediately tacked away onto port to "try something different", it worked, being windward to catch the next gust early, he managed to slide past the others into second place, but then managed to be the only sailor to capsize on the day; to windward, being caught by sudden shift, ending up on top of the 10 mark. Losing all the advantage gained on the penultimate leg of the race. Whilst Mark was tangled up with the final mark of the course and then trying to find wind enough to perform a penalty turn, the other three nearby sailors cruised past. Ben clearly well ahead, followed by Chris, then Alun and Peter.

Congratulations to Ben for a patiently won open meeting in occasionally frustrating wind conditions.

Well done to Thomas Bevan (420, Merthyr Tydfil SC) for taking part in his first open meeting and completing three races, and Sarah-Jane Thomas (460, Merthyr Tydfil SC) who sailed her first races today.

Tea and cakes were then enjoyed by all in the recently refurbished clubhouse.

Thanks

Thanks go out to the visitors, organisers, caterers, and safety boat crew (not needed except to move marks) and all who helped at the club on the day and earlier.

Merthyr Tydfil Sailing Club are proud to be hosting the Comet National Championships in August 2024, full details of this will be posted on the club and class association websites.

Mark Govier (Comet 667) and Assistant Secretary MTSC.



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