

Dartmouth Sailing Week Pilot Financial Dinghy Regatta @ Dittisham SC

Day 1

With a F3-4 west-southwesterly forecast, and a record 60 or so boats signed up and raring to go, arriving to find an utter flat calm out on the water was not the start to the Regatta our stoic race officer really wanted.

However, PRO Mike Foster is made of sterner stuff, and carried on regardless with the course planning and briefings, and unexpectedly, the wind filled in, and the Pilot Financial Regatta kicked off more-or-less bang on time.

Classic sparkling puffy Dittisham conditions gave everyone an energetic if not too scary start to the week, with two shortish, well-mannered races setting us up for potentially more wind, more distance and more hard work later in the event.

Mike and his splendid team of Ross, Helen, Hilary and Nigel set a windward/leeward (with gate) course of 2 laps for the first race, and a funkier windward/leeward/windward then home via the fixed marks for the second.

As usual, the best sailing was between races, where everyone was haring around planing here there and everywhere as the wind crept up, but the two quite different courses kept everyone entertained and interested for Day 1.

Capsizes and other calamities were kept to a minimum, with just the odd upsidaisy into the drink, a few comings together at the leeward marks (even though there were two to choose from), and a couple of second race boom breakages in the Laser fleet as those manly specimens Grahame and Kevin over-flexed their forearms and aluminium.

The PY fleet led the way, proving that the 0.4 mile beat was very fairly set, and very taxing. Going left obviously paid, as did going hard right where the channel was deepest, while going straight up the middle wasn't a bad idea either! The handicaps played out well, with a Streaker (Howard Frear) winning the first race, and a much faster D-Zero (Martin Thomas) the second. Two Aero-7s (Giles Bradford & Charlie Gilmore) were behind Howard in Race 1 (on handicap), while Victory Montgomery in his Topper sailed a blinder to come second in the second, with Giles third.

Both the Laser Full rig races were won by Simon Hardiman from Bartley SC, thoughtfully showing us locals how to sail properly in our own waters. Trailing behind were Ian Wakeling and Kevin Gilbraith in the first race, and Paul Mogridge and Ian W in the second.

The Laser Radials also had some Hardimans (Megan and Millie) to show them the way round, aided and abetted by Issy Glazebrook from the AWSC at Portland.

Race 1 top-3 finished Megan, Issy and our own Sue Thomas; while in Race 2 resplendent youth completely swept the board with Megan, Millie & Issy taking the top places.

Finally, the humungous Solo fleet (29 entries) were surprisingly well behaved on the line, and there was brilliantly close racing all the way down. Nikita's hooter seemed to be hooting every second as they all streamed into the finishes. The Solo heavyweights (and Jon Clarke) were to the fore in the building breezes, with both races finishing with a top 4 of Stuart Hydon, Will Loy, Jon Clarke (all DSC) and Toby Peacock (Chew Valley).

And so it ended, and back to shore for excellent pasties hotly delivered from the Red Lion, and some wonderful cakes and other sweetmeats provided by that perennial pair of pudding provisioners from the Streaker fleet, Janie and Jennie – thanks ladies, they were truly lovely.