

## **Laser Radial Boys, RYA Youth Nationals, Plas Heli, 2–8 April**

**By Ben Whaley**

For the first day of the RYA Youth Nationals, the competitors were met with a lack of wind and a lengthy three-hour postponement. Once the wind filled in, the competitors were launched to a varying strength of wind, though the average remained around 8knts. Milo Gill-Taylor took advantage up the second beat to post the first bullet of the championship, followed by Ben Whaley and Lewis Smith in second and third respectively. Once in sequence for the second race, a large motor boat cut in front of the start line, postponing the start. However, soon the wind died to below race levels and the committee made the decision to end racing for the day, leaving Milo Gill-Taylor leading overnight.

The second day started with more promise than the first day, with the fleet getting off on time at 11am. Ben Whaley took advantage of playing the shifts up the middle of Race 1, with Will Bedford in close pursuit, to lead round the course as most of the fleet hedged their bets on the left-hand side. In the second race of the day, Jake Farren-Price took advantage of a right-hand shift at the top of the beat to post his first bullet of the championship, following it quickly up with a further bullet in the last race coming in with great upwind boat speed from the pin end of the line to conclude the day. After day two, Ben Whaley led overall, with Jake Farren-Price scoring the best results of the day.

Day 3 started with a heavy breeze from the north west, with dubious sailing prospects. The Race Committee decided to launch the Lasers, RSX fleet and 29er Gold fleet to test the conditions. Once out on the course, the wind was up and down, with a high of 36knts and a steadier average of 27knts. This proved too much to complete a race for the Laser fleets, although an attempt at starting the Laser Standards was made, before being sent back to shore for an abandonment of racing for the day. Hats off to the RSX fleet who managed to complete one blast-off race.

Day 4 began similarly to Day 3. However, there was a clear need to rack up some races as there were only two days of the championship left and only four races

completed. The Committee decided to postpone for three hours to a 2pm start, but made it clear that they intended to race four races, so all of the competitors prepared for a lengthy and tough afternoon on the water. Jamie Calder solidified his position as the top heavy-wind sailor by posting an impressive four bullets from the four races, closely followed by Jake Farren-Price with a nonetheless impressive score of 2, 4, 3, 8. This meant that the scores were reversed quite significantly, leaving Jamie leading going into the last day, with Jake in second and Milo Gill-Taylor in position third overall.

For the last day of the championship, two races were planned with an earlier start time of 10.30am. The competitors were welcomed with a 7knt breeze from the north west, with a forecast to shift to the south west by 11am and pick up to a steady 13knts. Fortunately, the wind made its change early, so that the first race was underway by 11.30am. Dan Whiteley picked up his first bullet of the championship to take the lead from Jake Farren-Price at the final leeward mark, something which would prove championship changing by the end of the day. Merrick Stanley topped off the podium in this race to secure third place. Now the championship came down to the last race, as Jake was only one point behind Jamie on the scoreboard. Taking advantage of a right-hand shift to cross the fleet, George Ford led the fleet round the racecourse to pick up his first win of the championship, closely followed by Jordan Giles and Lewis Smith who also posted their strongest results in the final race. In a tight battle downwind to decide the championship, Jake Farren-Price got the better of Jamie Calder and finished one place ahead in sixth. However, as Jake was to find out once he got back to shore, Jamie took the title of Youth National Champion on countback, secured by his four bullets on day four. Dan Whiteley rounded off the podium with a commendable comeback on the final day.

### **Results:**

- 1 Jamie Calder (27pts)
- 2 Jake Farren-Price (27pts)
- 3 Dan Whiteley (34pts)