

Laser Performance Radial Masters Finale 2017 by Jon Emmett

Despite the midweek forecasts threatening gale force winds, and a severe drought in Queen Mary Sailing Club water levels, absolutely nothing could discourage 20 Radials for the Masters' End of Season Final on 25th/26th November kindly sponsored by Laser Performance who have looked after the Masters fleet incredibly well this season and have already signed up for continued support in 2018. We can't wait to see Joel Chadwick and fiancée next year!

It was a quality fleet that braved the cold but sunny conditions that tested the fleet for no less than 6, 4 lap races run by Bob and Isobel. With Olympians racing in the Standard fleet and our own Charlie Shearn in his first season and fresh back from training with none other than UK Olympic representatives Nick Thompson and Alison Young, the fleet had a great mix of people. You can watch a short video of the weekend taken by Lijia Xu on the [UK Laser Masters facebook page](#).

Current overall Radial Masters European and undisputed pond sailing expert, our man in the North, Ian Jones was certainly one of the favourites. Ian who is preparing for the 2018 World Championships in Ireland commented that next year's Worlds could hardly be closer to him and was a shorter journey than his trip to London... although he did come via Pwllheli where he had been working with Paul Brotherton on the Swedish 49er FX team's boats. They will certainly be ones to watch next season!

Race one started with a square line and like the vast majority of starts it went first time. A big shift shortly after the start allowed Jon Emmett to cross the fleet early and get away, although he was initially followed by Kevin Pearson. The shifty conditions showed that no lead was ever truly safe and huge gains could be made at any time as Pearson dropped back, and no surprise, after a difficult first couple of laps Jones moved into 2nd place.

Race three and this time it was our new UKLA Vice Chairman Rob Cage and Ian Aldridge who led the fleet as the right side came in up the first beat. Although up the 2nd beat they couldn't hold off a determined Emmett who grabbed his 3rd bullet of the day. Jones pushed hard to get to third but couldn't pass Cage who was now in his element. This meant overnight the scores were tight with Emmett, Jones and Cage taking the top three spots.

All sailors were then rewarded with Tea and Cakes, generously sponsored by local legend Orlando Gledhill, before the real entertainment began. First off was Gareth Edwards with his now infamous spot prizes donated by all round top bloke Max Hunt, who although currently unable to sail due to injury, is still sponsoring the events with South East Sailboats top quality systems.

Sailors then had a debrief from Jon Emmett talking about the day's racing: 10 – 15 knots north westerly. Who could ask for more in November! And even better, a talk from Olympic Gold and Bronze medallist Lijia Xu which was recorded on Facebook live. Just check out the [UK Laser Masters Page](#) to see the whole thing.

Laser Performance then provided a sponsored dinner, meaning a two-course meal for just £5 which unsurprisingly was taken up by most of the fleet. Then finally it was time to relax with quality music provided by Tony Wood and his wife Netter, accompanied by the busiest man of the weekend, Gareth Jones. There was some audience participation for a version of We are Sailing but it was soon decided that it was best left to the professionals. Meanwhile massages were on hand from Aniko of Gaal Sports Massage.

Race four and Jonathan Lewis port tacked the fleet and led for the first half of the race before missing a left shift. Jones led around the top mark but was passed by Emmett on the 2nd reach. From this point there was never more than a couple of boat lengths between them with the lead changing up the beat but Emmett regaining the lead by the marks. As these two pulled clear of the chasing fleet the other contender, Cage who had been celebrating his wife's birthday maybe a little too hard, was fighting it out in midfleet.

Race five and Emmett managed to get away as the fleet sailed through the standard rigs. Edwards was initially behind Emmett, but Jones soon passed him on the first race for a comfortable 2nd, enough to give him a guaranteed 2nd place overall and earned him an early shower and a hassle-free pack up... very understandable considering his long drive home. Jones is always one to watch and next year he may well also be dominating the Mirror fleet in a Father and son team with James.

Race six and it appeared that Cage just needs a twice race warm up each day, as he was once again on fire, clinging to Emmett's heels and not letting him escape. These two sailed around as if stuck together by glue, securing Cage third place overall

The fight for third was a tight one with Edwards really going for it at start time and nearly rolling Emmett at the pin end. Either he was determined for 3rd place or just wanted a top finish to guarantee a warm shower, he sheeted in early, too early, and was rewarded with a black flag, handing fourth place to Alridge by a single point, leaving Edwards in 5th. First lady was Alison Stevens in 8th followed by UKLA Communications rep Lizzie Brown in 14th.

After racing it was with huge thanks to the efforts of Paul and all the QMSC staff that sailors managed to get their boats back up the reservoir sides, which after 6 races of hiking appeared more like Everest. Once again sailors were rewarded with the fabulous Orlando Gledhill sponsored Tea and Cake before a prompt prize giving with plenty of Laser Performance goodies and top-quality wine from Chris Ellyatt. Indeed, some had to control themselves not to open the bottle before they went home! Thanks to Janet and everyone at QMSC who made the weekend possible. Hope to see you all next year at Parkstone Yacht Club on April 21st/22nd.

Full results may be found [here](#).

So, the overall series ends with the same results as the weekend with Emmett leading Jones and Cage in the ladder and the Qualification for next years Masters World Championships to be held in Dun Laoghaire from September 7th – September 15th, 2018. The UKLA is expecting to send a huge team across... watch this space.

Results from 2017 Ladder may be found [here](#).

