

Laser Standard Inland Championships, Rutland SC, 29–30 October 2016

By Daniel Whiteley

This year's Inland Championships were held at Rutland SC. Despite the dire forecast threatening a repeat of last year, 31 competitors arrived on Saturday morning for a weekend of racing in the light and shifty conditions.

Saturday promised the best wind of the two days with 5knts forecast. The reservoir was calm in the morning with few ripples. Nevertheless, all the fleets rigged in anticipation of the breeze that was supposed to fill in. The wind built gradually throughout the day but only peaked at about 3knts. This forced the Race Officer to abandon the day's racing in the early afternoon, yet many boats still launched to make the most of the light breeze that had established because Sunday's forecast seemed even more bleak.

Spirits were low as the fleet arrived on Sunday morning to thick fog and no wind. The racing was postponed indefinitely and some of the fleet began to pack up as few expected the wind to fill in. At 10am there was an announcement calling for a meeting in half an hour at which people expected the racing to be abandoned. However as 10.30am drew closer, the fog cleared and a 5knt breeze filled in prompting the Race Committee to announce the opposite, we were going sailing!

All the waiting around had obviously made the fleet restless as we all jumped the gun of the first start leading to a general recall. The Race Officer ran the second start with a black flag and the fleet got away cleanly. Sam Whaley, Dan Whiteley and Matt Whitfield were the three pin-end boats and made best use of the bias enabling them to tack and cross the fleet on a left shift to position themselves in the centre of the course as they approached the middle of the beat. Whaley played the next few shifts better than his opposition to round the top mark in first. He then maintained his lead for the reach, run and the majority of the second beat until Whitfield passed him with the help of a large gust and shift on the left of the course. After spotting this gust, Whitfield sailed over to it and subsequently left the fleet in his wake as he sailed to

the line to take the race win. Tom Fenemore showed impressive downwind pace to claim second place with Whaley finishing in third.

In the second race, the fleet came off the line on a right shift and began racing on what seemed to be an even race track. It soon became clear that this was not the case and the right was heavily favoured due to greater pressure and a persistent right shift. This left the leaders of the previous race stranded out towards the left of the course as the boats who separated right early rounded the windward mark and stormed off down the reach. The right again paid on the second beat and Jake Farren-Price worked up this side to round the second windward mark in first and held the lead the whole way to the finish to win both the race and the championship. The top three boats at the finish were Jake Farren-Price, Joseph Mullan and Craig Williamson respectively. A third race was not sailed as the wind dropped to almost nothing. Whitfield made an impressive comeback after a shaky first beat to finish eighth in the second race and take silver in the Championship with bronze going to Williamson.

Results:

- 1 Jake Farren-Price (9pts)
- 2 Matt Whitfield (9pts)
- 3 Craig Williamson (12pts)

Full results:

<http://www.kbsuk.com/laser/events/showrace.asp?EventID=92&RaceURL=%5Bresults%5D/stdinlands.2016nh.html>