

Rooster Laser Masters Series Finale  
Oxford SC 24 & 25 September  
Standard Fleet Report by Dave Freeman

From about Saturday of the preceding week, Windguru make it very clear that *girth* was going to be a major factor in the outcome of this event. As we approached the weekend, the forecast just built and so gathered the heavy weights (metaphorically and literally) of the UK Masters scene. Oxford was the venue and a cracking job they made of it too. Many thanks to the good folks of Oxford SC and Alan Davis (appropriately the eventual Standard winner and 1<sup>st</sup> Grand Master) who put in much of the prep to make this a raging success. Top job!

We all arrived and stared straight into 25knot Southerly gusts that were carving their way across the lake, from multiple directions as it happened, bearing their teeth at anyone who wasn't up for a fight! The dinghy park banter about who was carrying the most "timber" started early and continued throughout the day. Despite the wind, the temperatures were warm and the sun shone ..... unlike much of the boat handling! The c90kg boys promptly hit the front in race 1 with the heavy weather specialist Orlando Gledhill taking the bullet and clearly enjoying life....\*^\$\*! Chris Ellyatt showed that his extra speed this year was consistent, took 2<sup>nd</sup> and Alan Davis 3<sup>rd</sup>. Ten kilos down the fleet the rest the boys cracked on, hoping that the big lads would tire and boat handling would let them down. In the conditions, boat handling was the order of the day and staying in the gusts off the wind. The wind speeds could vary from 12 to 25 knots which meant that 20 seconds in the "fast lane" could put you right back in it...or out of it! Typified by a comedy leeward mark rounding where, places 5 to 9 were scooped up by a 25knot-er, and delivered at the mark with places 1-4. There were multiple close quarters capsizes and gybe dodging tacks, resulting in us all bow to stern on exit! Cracking racing!! Places 1-3 from race 1 were re-ordered with Alan 1st, Chris 2nd and Orlando 3rd. Race 3, split them up with Gareth Greenfield resurrecting some of his old GB squad skills, taking the bullet. Alan hanging in there at 2nd and Chris 3rd. Alan lead overnight with Chris 1 point behind and Orlando 3 off the front.

Sunday saw a 90° shift out to the West and highly variable conditions; 10-25knots, sun, rain, hail, 30° shifts, 5°C to 20°C. The race committee did a great and pragmatic job to get us away with minimum fuss....although there were some recalls and some BFDs!! Naming no names....Roger. Race 4 shook the whole fleet up with the top 7 boats from day 1 all finishing in the teens, or worse, apart from Alan who's never say die attitude awarded him a 3<sup>rd</sup>, with Gareth Greenfield taking his second bullet in succession! Could he be making a late run??! Nope. 10<sup>th</sup> and BFD followed, leaving him a creditable but variable 5<sup>th</sup> overall and 1<sup>st</sup> Apprentice. Tim Keithley from West Riding SC sailed a blinder to steal 2<sup>nd</sup>, splitting the overnight leaders. Alan then took 2<sup>nd</sup> in race 5 leaving him unassailable for the title, which was bloody lucky as he BFD on the last! Neil Peters put in a cameo at 3<sup>rd</sup>, Orlando 4<sup>th</sup> but Tim Law, the fittest hexagenarian in the fleet, snatched the bullet putting him back into podium contention with 1 to go. However, his 7<sup>th</sup> in the final race wasn't quite enough as the discards came into play, finishing 4<sup>th</sup> overall and 2<sup>nd</sup> Grand Master.

The final race left the mere mortals fighting it out for the remaining podiums. The massively variable conditions across the course split the fleet with Chris (2<sup>nd</sup> Master and 3<sup>rd</sup> overall), Orlando (1<sup>st</sup> Master and 2<sup>nd</sup> overall) and some guy called Dave Freeman (2<sup>nd</sup> Apprentice and 6<sup>th</sup> overall) breaking clear. Chris (and his hangover) fell by the wayside at the end of lap 3 and Orlando eventually lay waste to Freeman to win the last.

Originally, this event wasn't on the fixture list but all those who attended were pretty unanimous about the success. Great management, great weather, great company, great event...see you next year!!

**Dave Freeman**

**P.S. The final standings for the 2016 Rooster Master Super Series are still to be crunched and will be awarded at the first event next year Date TBC**