

Noble Marine Laser Spring Qualifier, WPNSA, 9–10 March

Standard by Jack Wetherell

The first Laser Qualifier of the season, being held at WPNSA this weekend, had a fresh forecast. Racing was likely on Saturday, but with a forecast of gusts over 50 knots for Sunday, it wasn't looking great for the second day. Since last year, there have been a few changes in the Class Association. One of the better ones meant the Race Officer was able to schedule four races on Saturday; a big day out for all.

Race 1 started with 20 knots from 275. A starboard-bias line and some good starts punched Jack Wetherell and Nick Thompson ahead early. A quarter of the way up the beat, Wetherell split right from Thompson, who continued on starboard. With the wind being too far right for the classic wind-bend scenario in Portland Harbour, Wetherell was able to sail some nice shifts to lead around the windward mark. Lorenzo Chiavarini had also sailed a nice beat to round just ahead of Thompson and Elliot Hanson. Big bands of pressure were streaking over the course for the downwind; a theme which stayed all day. Wetherell led around the gate, followed by Hanson and Chiavarini. Hanson played the second beat very well to take the lead and go on to win the race, followed by Wetherell and then Chiavarini.

The second race had a slight pin bias, but with the fleet aware of the potential gains on the right, nobody ventured too far down the line. Thompson and Chiavarini started best mid-line, whilst Hanson and Wetherell did the best from the starboard end and got on to port early. By the top mark, Thompson was leading and showing some good wheels upwind. Next up was Chiavarini and Wetherell. These three boats managed to get away from the chasing pack on the first downwind and would fight it out for the rest of the race. Chiavarini found some pressure on the downwind to move up to first at the gate, but he didn't hold the lead for long because Thompson again led at the windward mark, with Wetherell second and Chiavarini third. The final run had the added complication of the Standards catching up with the middle of the Radial fleet – Chiavarini managed it best with a good overtaking manoeuvre to pass Wetherell and Thompson to take the win. Thompson was second and Wetherell third.

Throughout Race 2, the wind had clocked ten degrees left and the line was now set with ten degrees of pin bias for the third race. Wetherell, Thompson and Michael Beckett made the best starts down near the pin end. Wetherell was positioned furthest left and, with a slow persistent shift left up the first beat, he led around the windward mark, Beckett was second and Thompson third. The boats were neck and neck on the first downwind and Thompson managed to lead round the gate. All boats chose the same gate mark in touching distance of each other. Ten seconds out of the gate, the boats were greeted with another big left shift, Thompson tacked clean, Wetherell and Beckett almost capsized to windward, whilst Hanson, in fourth, also got on to port nicely. That was on the only change on the second upwind. Thompson held the lead till the windward mark, Hanson was second and Beckett

third. Down the final run and reach to the finish, battle commenced between Thompson and Hanson. Hanson came out on top to win his second race of the day, Thompson was second and Beckett third.

With three races in the bag, tired legs, aching backs and the massive forecast for Sunday, the final race was going to be the decider. The points were very close at the top, with first to fourth split by one point. A starboard bias line had all boats in the windward half of the line and Hanson got the best start. Lots of boats chose to set up again on the right-hand side of the upwind. Andrew Bridgeman chose the left and maximized the gains from a 20-degree persistent left shift to just sneak inside Sam Whaley at the windward mark. Whaley sailed a great first run to lead around the gate, with Bridgeman now second. Hanson and Chiavarini were in touching distance of the leading pack at the windward mark and had now moved up into the top five. Whaley sailed very smartly up the second beat to consolidate his position to lead at the windward. Hanson had propelled himself to second, with Chiavarini hot on his heels. On the final run, Chiavarini once again made gains downwind, passing Whaley and Hanson, to win the race. Hanson was second and Whaley third.

Back to base after a hard day, the sailors were greeted with complimentary snacks and a debrief with a Q&A of some of the day's best performers. Valuable learning for all and a great idea by the Class. Given that the forecast had, if anything, got worse for Sunday, the race team decided to cancel racing for Sunday meaning the scores were now final. Overall, Elliot Hanson took the Qualifier win, Lorenzo Chiavarini was second and Nick Thompson was third.

Results:

1st Elliot Hanson (4pts)

2nd Lorenzo Chiavarini (5pts)

3rd Nick Thompson (8pts)

Full results:

<https://www.kbsuk.com/laser/events/showrace.asp?EventID=111&RaceURL=%5BResults%5D/Laser%20Standard%20Q1%202019.htm>

Radial by Chloe Barr

The forecast for the weekend's Laser Qualifier looked in excess of 25knots from about a week before the event was due to take place. Luckily, the weather for Saturday was sailable with a westerly wind of 15–25knts. In the briefing, the Race Committee announced that due to the large forecast for Sunday we would be sailing four races on Saturday, with Sunday likely to be called off.

Radials started the racing with no hiccups and on time! Ben Elvin, Jon Emmett and Chloe Barr all started at the pin end and gained a lead, along with Matilda Nicholls from the middle of the line and Dan McGaughey from the right. McGaughey rounded the windward mark first, having taken some small shifts in the last quarter of the beat. Emmett blasted past Elvin on the reach and Alexandre

Kowalski sent it downwind into the top five. During the second beat, Elvin and Barr went left into Portland Bill and came out with a huge advantage, to come first and second in the race, followed by Kowalski and then Emmett.

Race 2 saw Elvin, Barr and Nick Welbourne start at the pin end again; a small shift helped Barr and Elvin both tack and cross the fleet, with Welbourne hanging on longer. As Barr lost her lane to Elvin, he rounded first, followed by Welbourne and then Barr. The outer lap saw a tough battle between McGaughey, Finley Dickinson, Emmett and Barr, with Emmett overtaking Barr on the final downwind to come third. Elvin won and Welbourne came second.

Lots more people came to the pin end for Race 3, which turned out to be the place to be as the wind started to drop, with more pressure and a shift on the left. Emmett reached into the mark and rounded first by quite a way, followed by Alexandre Kowalski, Elvin and Matt Beck. On the second beat, the shift from Portland had little effect because an overall right shift had come in. McGaughey made good use of the shift to get back into the top ten. Emmett won the race, followed by Kowalski and then Elvin.

For Race 4, the wind had come back up, with the race for the overall win between Emmett and Elvin. They both come off the pin end, with Emmett going high and Elvin above, but many people lost their lanes, with some having to tack and some ducking. As the wind kept shifting left throughout the beat, many people ended up over standing the mark and reaching in, which seemed to be quicker than tacking on the layline as demonstrated by Elvin who was rolled by Emmett. Emmett rounded first, followed by James Foster, Elvin and a large port layline bundle. Elvin and Foster had a tough battle round the next few legs, with Foster eventually coming second and Elvin third.

Overall, a very physical and tiring day of racing, so a massive well done to everyone who stuck it out! Congratulations to Jon Emmett for winning, with Ben Elvin second and Chloe Barr third.

Congratulations to Adriana Penruddocke in the Radial fleet who won the mentor competition for this Qualifier. Her mentor over the weekend was the overall Radial winner, Jon Emmett.

Results:

1st Jon Emmett (5pts)

2nd Ben Elvin (5pts)

3rd Chloe Barr (10pts)

Full results:

<https://www.kbsuk.com/laser/events/showrace.asp?EventID=111&RaceURL=%5Bresults%5D/Laser%20Radial%20Q1%202019.htm>



The winners at this weekend's Laser event at WPNSA