

## Noble Marine Plymouth Mount Batten Radial Qualifier 23/24 March

By Jon Emmett

The 2019 Spring Qualifiers have been the closest series from memory with every single event decided on tie breaker! In the end it was Hannah Snellgrove who walked away with 2 wins from 2 events, but it was a tough series, and with Double Olympian and 2016 World Champion Ali Young currently out with Injury (but back in time for the Olympic trials which start in Palma) the series is only going to get tougher.

The ever popular mentor campaign continued this year with multiple National Champion Hannah Snellgrove being mentor for Plymouth (Ben Elvin was mentor for Stokes Bay and Jon Emmett for WPNSA).

Mentoring is for all rigs and chosen at random from social media competition. Hannah's mentee was Ben Flower and Hannah had this to say: I think the mentoring scheme is a great initiative - I have only got to where I have in sailing because I've been lucky enough to learn from people along the way - so it's really great to be able to pass on some of the things I've picked up, and it's a cool learning experience as a mentor as well to see how somebody else thinks their way around the race course. It was a pleasure to work with someone as enthusiastic and passionate as Ben this weekend and try to address some of his key goals.

You can also see live videos and post sailing interviews on the UKLA facebook page:

[www.facebook.com/UKLaserClassAssociation](http://www.facebook.com/UKLaserClassAssociation)

Saturday saw a light to medium fickle North Easterly which made for a high scoring regatta. However, with a full 6 races sailed over two days the cream rose to the top.

A name to watch for in the future is Finlay Dickson who achieved an absolutely solid first race where he defended the left forcing his rivals to overstand and give him the bullet. Jon Emmett and Ben Elvin were left fighting for second with Emmett far overstanding, giving Elvin some breathing space but no chance to catch Dickson.

Hannah Snellgrove, one of the few top girls doing the trials was also at Plymouth and made a cracking start in a race where again the left came out top. She battled it through, this time with Elvin who is still on a mission to win his first Qualifier having just been beaten by Emmett at WPNSA and Snellgrove at Stokes Bay. Another second for Elvin moved him closer to his goal with Arthur Fry coming third.

Race three, and just as the fleet thought they had cracked it, it was the right hand side which came out and in it Mila Monaghan. With such a commanding lead at the first mark she made it look easy as she sailed away into the distance.

Sunday and the Northerly wind, while maybe steadier, caused some interesting tidal situations, which resulted in no one getting 6 races inside the top ten. The wind was once again light to medium but with a long sail out it was still a tough weekend.

Race four was initially led by Arthur Farley before he was chased down and overtaken by Emmett on the first downwind. Farley then chose the wrong gate at the bottom allowing Arthur Fry and Stephanie Wingeatt into second and third respectively. With Snellgrove and Elvin out of the top ten everything now opened up again...

Snellgrove had other plans and immediately came back with a win, after starting well down the line at the favoured pin end, whereas the majority of the fleet, including Elvin and Emmett to their detriment, chose the up tide committee boat end. So, whilst Snellgrove did an horizon job on the fleet they had their work cut out to get back in the race. Matilda Nichols (please check out her facebook interview) showed that she had her head firmly screwed on and why she had so much success last year, to take second with young Dickson who took no less than four top five results over the weekend coming in third.

The final race was once again Nichols in the driving seat after a great start, but Emmett just got the better of her by the windward mark to grab a win. However, Elvin and Finlay were on the charge to take second and third respectively but the fight for the event was happening further back with Snellgrove pulling though to 5<sup>th</sup>. It was enough to once again win on tie break counting 1,1,2,5,6 to Emmett's 1,1,3,5,5. What a way to end the series!

The next set of Qualifiers begins in Autumn 2019 and will decide the places for sailors at the World Championships in the Olympic year. Watch this space.

