

Noble Marine Laser Radial Autumn Qualifier, South Shields Sailing Club, 16–17 September

By Hannah Snellgrove

A contingent of 67 Laser Radial sailors made the trip to South Shields SC on the north-east coast last weekend for the first of three Autumn Noble Marine World and European Qualifiers.

Sunshine and light north-easterly winds greeted the competitors on the Saturday morning and three races were completed in sailing conditions made tricky with a huge rolling swell. Despite three further races being scheduled for the Sunday, a lack of wind and a democratic fleet vote meant that racing was abandoned and Saturday's result stood.

It was Swanage SC's Ben Whaley who led the pack round the windward mark in the first race having played the shifts in more pressure out on the right-hand side of the course. George Povall, from Hickling Broad, and Ali Young, fresh from Rio, chased Whaley down having used opportunities to get back from the lighter left-hand side. However, it was Lymington's Hannah Snellgrove who sailed around to the right of the bunch of three on the downwind leg to lead at the gate. Whaley committed to the right-hand side of the course again and this proved to be successful as he led around the windward mark for the second time and could not be caught. Young overhauled Snellgrove on the final downwind and they took second and third respectively.

The fairly slack tide at the first start had been building throughout the race and by the second start had kicked in with a vengeance. This held the fleet back from the line, but the slight left–right component caused some issues for boats queuing up to start at the Committee Boat end.

It was the boats that started a little further down the line, got away cleanly and managed to tack across to the right-hand side of the course who came out best. The

leading group managed to extend away from the fleet and the ensuing tussle led to Young emerging victorious from Ellie Cumpsty in second, followed by Povall.

The third race proved to be a little different. While some of the leading group came in from the right, it was Snellgrove, having started near the pin and taken advantage of a left shift to get across on top of the fleet, who led around the top mark, with much of the fleet overstanding the starboard layline. Snellgrove held off the challenge from Young on the downwind, but it was Povall who got past both boats on the second upwind by pushing out to the right and building up a lead that could not be overcome. Young got past Snellgrove on the downwind and these boats took second and third.

Second in the final race meant Young took overall victory with Povall as runner up. A fifth for Whaley in race three was enough for him to take third overall from Snellgrove on count back.

Results:

1 Ali Young, 3pts

2 Georgina Povall, 4pts

3 Ben Whaley, 6pts

Full results:

<http://www.kbsuk.com/laser/events/showrace.asp?EventID=87&RaceURL=%5Bresults%5D/sthshieldrad.16nh.html>