

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

By Sam Whaley

On the weekend of 16–17 September, 33 Laser Standards made their way up to South Shields SC for the first Autumn Noble Marine World and European Qualifier. Upon arrival, sailors were greeted with a chilly 15knt breeze. However, it started immediately to steadily decrease until by start time there was a consistent 6–9knts. With spring tides and big leftover swell, it was certain to be an interesting day's sailing.

Race 1 got underway and, with a pin bias line, it was Elliot Hanson who quickly tacked over and crossed most of the fleet. However, it was Whaley, who had started at the starboard end and headed into more favourable tide on the right, who rounded the windward mark first with a healthy lead. He was followed by Hanson in second and Alistair Goodwin in third. The following reach downwind was made interesting by large skewed waves and tide taking you downwind. Up the next beat, Whaley and Hanson had a good battle with Hanson emerging on top with metres to go before the final windward mark. Hanson won the race, closely followed by Whaley and Goodwin in second and third.

In Race 2, more people had clocked onto the right-hand track and it was Hanson and Jamie Calder who managed to execute their plans successfully to lead first and second around the windward mark. With Hanson and Calder out in front, Joe Mullan and Whaley had a battle around the course for third and fourth respectively with Mullan taking third place.

After a short postponement, with the wind shifting progressively right, Race 3 got underway. Once again, Hanson made the best use of his speed to round the windward mark first, with Jack Cookson rounding second and Jack Wetherell in third. The standings stayed the same even as the wind died down towards the end of the race and the fleet headed ashore ready for the next day's racing.

Unfortunately, Sunday dawned with very little wind both in the forecast and on the water. After hanging around for a few hours with still no wind, the infamous Ken vote came out and the racing was abandoned for the day.

Elliot Hanson took the overall win while Sam Whaley's consistency earned him second place. Third place overall and first Youth was Jamie Calder, while Jack Cookson finished fourth and Jack Wetherell fifth.

Results:

1 Elliot Hanson, 2pts

2 Sam Whaley, 6pts

3 Jamie Calder, 7pts

Full results:

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