

Noble Marine Laser Spring Qualifier, Pwllheli, 14–15 April 2018

Reports by Jon Emmett and Sam Whaley

Radial

On 14 April, 56 Laser Radial sailors travelled to Pwllheli, Wales, for the final Spring Qualifier. Many of them (fresh?) from the Youth Nationals in Largs, Scotland.

The Race Committee did a great job to get one race away on Saturday with the 10knts starting breeze gradually falling to around 4knts. The whole fleet finished, the sun came out and the fleet drifted home to enjoy a relaxed pack up and the Welsh scenery and maybe even a spot of sunbathing! At the start, Matt Beck won the pin end with Jon Emmett close by. However, Beck had the patience and stayed left waiting for the wind to shift and his patience was rewarded with first around the windward mark, while Emmett, who bailed out early, was mid fleet. Tom Pollard found a lane to the left and managed to get back in the race. As the wind gradually died, it was Jack Fahy, who will shortly be going to the Youth Worlds for Ireland, who grabbed the race win from Oliver Blackburn and Mila Monaghan (Beck hung in there for fourth).

On Sunday the fleet enjoyed 10–15knts all day with boats able to plane and surf downwind on occasion. Ben Elvin, who had a disappointing first race by his standard, had a small lead at the windward mark on Race 2 which he extended and extended and extended. Tom Pollard was clear in second but misjudged the laylines on the second lap which allowed Emmett to close and then overtake for second. Tom Renny took fourth place.

Race 3 and it was too close to call at the windward mark with the whole fleet seeming to arrive at the same time. At the bottom gate, Pollard, Beck and Emmett went right and were first into the breeze, finishing first, second and third. However, Chloe Barr, who sailed consistently all weekend, finished fourth but had nearly sailed around the outside of everyone on the final run, before ultimately losing out on the last reach to finish.

Going into the final race of the three scheduled for Sunday, Tom Pollard was leading Emmett, but as less than ten points separated the top eight, lots of place changes were possible. The fleet, keen to complete the series, jumped the gun several times and after several postponements the Black Flag claimed a few victims, before the final start which was all clear. Initially, the leaders from Race 4 came from the Committee Boat end and it was close at the first mark. By the leeward gate, Emmett was leading but it was super close between him and Renny. As the wind filled in from behind, the pack closed and a storming downwind from Elvin saw him charge into second place down the final run of the final race to take third overall from Tom Pollard on a tie breaker. Beck had done enough in the first three races to keep second overall. Chloe Barr took a very well deserved fifth place overall.

We hope as many people as possible will join us at the Mount Batten Centre in Plymouth, 21–27 July, for this year's Laser National Championships.

Results:

1st Jon Emmett (6pts)

2nd Matt Beck (11pts)

3rd Ben Elvin (12pts)

Full results:

<https://www.kbsuk.com/laser/events/showrace.asp?EventID=103&RaceURL=%5Bresults%5D/pwllheli.rad.2018nh.html>



The Radial fleet at Pwllheli. Photo: Green Sea Photography

Standard

An unusually small fleet of just 15 Laser Standards made the journey to Pwllheli for the last of this year's Noble Marine Spring Qualifiers. However, the weather on Saturday was on our side as we had sunshine and a nice 6–8knts, a bit less than the forecast 9–13knts.

Race 1 got underway on a pin bias line, with the fleet tacking soon after on a left shift. Despite the wind slowly going back right, it was the boats who held on all the way to the right of the course who picked up a decent bit of pressure and came in at the windward mark. Whilst there were a few battles going on around the track, the positions remained about the same with Jake Farren-Price winning, Anthony Parke second and Joe Woodley third.

In Race 2, the wind decreased significantly and started in less than 4knts of wind, decreasing further as we went around the course. Sam Whaley led around the windward mark with Jack Hopkins second and Dan Whiteley third. On the following downwind, the wind died to less than a knot at times and, after a gybe, Whaley got yellow flagged, allowing Whiteley to draw alongside. When the race was shortened prematurely, Whiteley was closest to the finish boat and took the win closely followed by Whaley and Farren-Price. With the wind not playing ball, the fleet were sent in ready for racing on the Sunday.

With a big forecast of 18–30knts, many sailors were disappointed to get to the club on Sunday morning to find a very different picture of a 7–15knt range. Racing quickly got underway and Lewis Smith sailed well to lead around the windward mark, followed by Jake Farren-Price and Dan Whiteley. In marginal planing conditions, there were many place changes on the following reach and Whiteley took the lead, with Sam Whaley pulling up to second. Over the following lap, Whiteley held on to win the race, with Whaley second and Lewis Smith sailing well to claim third.

In Race 4, a big righty threw up some challenging conditions but Whiteley capitalized and led from the first windward mark all the way to the finish. With very offset marks, it was hard to overtake and Parke showed consistency to finish second and Jake Farren-Price was third.

The final race of the day also had a starboard bias start line. Whaley got a good start and managed to hold all the way for the left shift with Whiteley above him. These two then tacked and crossed the fleet and led around the windward by a considerable distance. A close battle occurred over the next lap, but this time Whaley emerged on top with Whiteley having to settle for second and Parke third.

Overall, Dan Whiteley sailed well to claim the overall win with Sam Whaley second and Jake Farren-Price third. That's it for the Spring Qualifiers; hopefully, see you all at the Laser Nationals from the 21–27 July at the Mount Batten Centre, Plymouth. It will be great fun and most likely great conditions too!

Results:

1st Daniel Whiteley (5pts)

2nd Sam Whaley (9pts)

3rd Jake Farren-Price (11pts)

Full results:

<https://www.kbsuk.com/laser/events/showrace.asp?EventID=103&RaceURL=%5Bresults%5D/pwllhelistd.2018nh.html>