

## **Noble Marine Laser Radial Spring Qualifier, Stokes Bay SC, 18–19 March**

**By Hannah Snellgrove**

The two previous Noble Marine Worlds and Europeans Laser Qualifiers had got the 2017 season off to a gentle light-wind start, but the 79 Laser Radials who had entered the third Qualifier of the season at Stokes Bay were promised a much livelier time from the weekend's forecast.

The eastern Solent delivered some great sailing conditions on the Saturday, as the fleet launched into a fresh 20kt south-westerly breeze ready for three exciting races on a trapezium/sausage/trapezium course.

The tide was with the wind for the first race and most of the fleet tacked onto port straight after the start to get inshore and into less adverse current. However, it was Ali Young, Milo Gill Taylor and Jordan Giles who were the top three to the windward mark having made the most of the biased pin end and got into good port lanes. A capsize from Gill-Taylor allowed Giles and Ellie Cumpsty to overtake him.

The wind really blew up and created close to survival conditions for the second lap with the downwind legs becoming a case of holding on for most competitors! Giles slipped to ninth and Gill-Taylor to fifth, credible results considering some further swimming that occurred for both sailors. The experience of Laser legends Steve Cockerill and Jon Emmett shone through as they took third and fourth respectively behind Young and Cumpsty.

In the second race, the tide began to turn and the wind eased a little, creating some more complicated decisions for the sailors. It was the group who launched off the biased pin end who were first to the windward mark, with Young leading the way from Gill-Taylor and Ben Elvin.

Young and Emmett extended away on the first downwind and held on until the finish, with Hannah Snellgrove sneaking past Gill-Taylor at the last mark to take third, having taken a lower route on the final reach.

With the tide now carrying the fleet over the line at some pace, the black flag came into its own and caught out a handful of sailors in the first attempt at starting the third race, although it meant that they did, at least, win the race to the warm showers!

The fleet were understandably more cautious on attempt two, with the windward mark leaders nailing the timing down on their approach to the biased pin end, before tacking and crossing the fleet.

Snellgrove led at the windward mark from Emmett and Young, and she held them off for the first lap and a second upwind, before Young's impressive downwind speed overhauled Snellgrove and saw her take her third bullet from three. Emmett completed his consistent day by holding off Elvin to take third.

With an even fresher breeze on Sunday, which was steadily increasing and gusting over 35kts, racing was abandoned and the results from Saturday stood. Young's perfect scoreline handed her the event victory, with Snellgrove tied on points with Emmett but taking second place on count back.

Results:

1 Ali Young, 2pts

2 Hannah Snellgrove, 5pts

3 Jon Emmett, 5pts

Full results:

<http://www.kbsuk.com/laser/events/showrace.asp?EventID=95&RaceURL=%5Bresults%5D/stbayrad.17nh.html>