

Noble Marine Laser Radial Autumn Qualifier, Sunderland YC, 23–24 September

By Georgina Povall

Sunderland YC hosted the first Noble Marine Laser Radial Autumn Qualifier on 23–24 September with 61 Radials entered and a good forecast for the weekend. Following the precedent set at the last few northern Qualifiers, Saturday morning was bright sunshine with an 8–12knt southeasterly breeze. Out on the race course, there was some side swell and, as Ken had warned in the morning briefing, there was a significant amount of tide going up the course. True to form, the Radial fleet ignored this warning and decided that some starting practice would be useful with 32 black flags and five recalled starts on Saturday.

Race 1 was led by those that took the pin end bias, tacked and held out right. Ben Whaley led the charge around the top mark and covered the fleet to maintain his position till the finish. Molly Sacker held on to second position and rounding out the top three was Georgina Povall. Race 2 finally got underway after some more warm-up starts; the winning strategy seemed to be taking the starboard bias and holding to make the most of a long winding right shift which came with pressure. Flicking onto port in the top third of the beat saw Emma Crane lead at the first mark. The fleet spread out on the long run, which was against the tide, and as the wind dropped, the top three pulled away from the fleet with racing tight in the main pack. No gate marks meant some very crowded and loud leeward mark roundings. Povall took the bullet for Race 2, followed by Crane and then Alison Young. Race 3 was won by Young who won the pin and led the whole way to the finish, leaving Matt Beck and Tom Renny to battle it out for second and third respectively.

Sunday morning in Sunderland was sunny with a slightly breezier day of around 12–14knts forecast. Three more races were scheduled and, to the relief of many Radial sailors, the tide was with the wind for most of the day making starting slightly less stressful. Despite knowing this before launching nearly the entire Radial fleet were taken by surprise at the gun of Race 4 when no one was making the pin-end against the tide. Whaley took advantage of this with a textbook port flyer, but it was Ellie Cumpsty who sailed the best beat and led around the top mark by holding out on the right. It was an all-female top three in race 4 with Povall, Cumpsty and Young crossing the line first, second and third respectively. Race 5 was much the same with the pin end leading the charge, Povall led the way to the finish, with Young taking second place on the final run from Whaley. There was a big change in Race 6 as the wind picked up more in line with the forecast and the Radials started in 13–15knts. Whaley and Clementine Thompson led from the pin end with Cumpsty and Povall chasing from the Committee Boat. The top four extended away from the rest of the fleet on the run, surfing some big swell down to the leeward mark. Whaley clinched the final race of the weekend to finish top Youth with Matilda Nicholls adding a seventh to her score line to secure first female youth.

Overall, Sunderland delivered some great conditions making the long journey for many worthwhile with Georgina Povall taking first overall, followed by Ali Young in second place and Ben Whaley in third.

Results:

- 1 Georgina Povall (8pts)
- 2 Alison Young (13pts)
- 3 Ben Whaley (14pts)

Full results:

<http://www.kbsuk.com/laser/events/showrace.asp?EventID=96&RaceURL=%5Bresults%5D/sunderlandrad.17nh.html>