

Report on RYA Keel Boat Finals Royal Thames Yacht Club

Cowes 28-30th September



Team on the way to a first

The Club had decided to enter a team for this event starting with the qualifier hosted by the Royal Northern & Clyde. A team was put together consisting of all RDYC members, unfortunately the event was cancelled at the last minute. The RYA having promised to consult on another date failed to do so and the alternative was not suitable for the team. It was suggested that we should ask for an entry into the final. Two weeks before the event we were given a wild card entry.

The SIS stated that it should be made up of all club members, after an email appeal to the membership it was obvious we could not comply in providing a competitive team made up of all club members. After a telephone conversation with the RTYC it became apparent that they welcomed our participation and waived this stipulation. At the event it was apparent that some teams were made up of non-members. The Royal Yacht Squadron was definitely in this category with some form of associate membership?

The team captain was Owain Matthews fresh from his second at the Firefly Nationals, crewed by Ewan Mchenry and Martin Rudkin and Rosie Sibthorp. I was team support, and stand in crew member. Cowes is not the easiest place to get to from the north which meant overnight

accommodation in Southampton to allow an early Jetfoil on the Friday morning. A number of teams used ribs to commute which was a far cheaper if somewhat uncomfortable method, After registration the team were out on the water at 1030 for an exciting introduction to J70 sailing. This was new experience to all the crew and myself. Certainly the experience of planning off under asymmetric was addictive. Fortunately for my £1000 damage deposit the wind never reached the same level and Owain was able to stay clear of trouble!

The team stayed two nights in The Island Sailing Clubs basic accommodation. After completing three races on the Friday a welcome drinks session was held at Shepherds Wharf. Saturday saw more races being held in lovely sunny condition with 15K of breeze, The team started to gel and at the end of the day they were lying fifth out of eighteen which sparked a lot of interest in "this club from where in the North ?" ! After racing a barbeque was provided at Shepherds Wharf along with a few beers in a welcoming atmosphere.

The final day I went out on the water with the Vice Commodore of the Royal Thames on his umpire rib and was able to use my iPhone to snap these pictures. There was an official photographer whose website only has a few shots of our team wearing the D bibs. These can be viewed on www.sportograph.tv with drone footage and are of rather better quality! With five races to go any of 5 teams could have won the event (the results of 36 races can be viewed on events .ksail.co.uk) Unfortunately despite having a number of first and seconds two OCS 's did not help ! One race 5 out of 8 boats were over despite which there was no general recall, this I suspect was due to the pressure to get races in.

This was a very competitive umpired event with a high standard of sailing and eighth was a respectable result. The 12 J70's been in excellent condition and are owned by the RTYC and The Squadron they cost £40000 each and a significant investment. The boats are available for charter to members from their base at Shepherds Wharf marina where they are dry sailed.

I certainly feel that this is an event which is well worth being supported by the club given plenty of notice to allow organising a team-hopefully of all members.

Derek R Matthews