

MONDAY

After a blustery day on Sunday with gusts exceeding 30 knots it was not surprising that some competitors held back for the first day of Chichester Harbour Race Week today, either by delaying their entry, or deciding that the conditions looked too similar to risk going afloat. In fact whilst the wind was pretty settled between 250° and 240°, the mean strength was around 20 knots in the starting areas for both Series A and B.

On Series A the solid breeze of 18 knots gusting 22 from 250 degrees greeted those competitors who dared and after a short 30 minute postponement the race team decided to go ahead and give everyone a proper "Fed' Week blast"! A starboard course was used to keep the gybe mark off the evil waves on the winner bank. Given the conditions racing was shortened to ensure the weary sailors were ashore before the spring flood got going. There were many relieved and happy faces at the finish line and plenty of ammunition for some good stories in the bar tonight! In the Asymmetric Handicap Christian Reynolds & Emma Coates (Locks SC) in their RS 800 took 1st place on corrected time ahead of Theo Galyer (HISC) in his RS700. The Fast Handicap Contender of Richard Keevil (MRSC) comfortably led the Osprey of Richard Marshal & Nick Willis (HISC) on corrected time, with only 3 finishers in total. David Valentine (ESSC) in his Devoti took the gun in the DZero / Aero 9 fleet, whilst in the Finns visitor Martyn Hughes (Warsash) finished ahead of Simon Petite (MRSC). In the RS200, the largest entry of 30 and 25 starters, the fourteen finishers were led by Tom and Emma Morris (HISC) ahead the Lewis girls (MRSC).

On Series B with a slightly varied wind of 240°, pre start wind readings were averaging 20 knots, gusting up to 23. After a short postponement, all races in series B got underway, with a shortened beat but without any recalls. Some ambiguity belied the expressions / faces on the competitors, as to whether they were full of excitement or sheer terror at the speed of the reaches. The Fevas especially all managed extremely well in the gusty conditions which invariably created a choppy sea, and whilst the wind finally started to ease this was not until most competitors had returned to the beach. In the Medium H'cap 16 of the 25 entered braved the start with the Hadrons H2 of Dick Holden (Arun YC) and Douglas Powell (Burghfield) took 1st and 2nd place respectively.

In the Solos only 6 of the 18 entries ventured out today and the youth of Finley Dickinson (HISC) showed his fitness in taking the bullet. The Fevas had 17 starters and 10 finishers with Ben Tuttle and Will Balch (HISC) finishing ahead of Robin and Sam Leather (Gurnard SC).

All racing for Series C was postponed to another day after the strong winds built a large choppy sea over the shallow west mud course area. Tomorrow's forecast bodes for lighter winds and more settled conditions.

Robert Macdonald