

CHRW Monday 9th August

After a year's absence due to the pandemic, a strong entry had assembled at Hayling Island Sailing Club for the ever-popular Chichester Harbour Race Week. A strong gusty wind from WSW greeted competitors on Monday morning and with a forecast that wasn't abating it was going to be a lively day's racing. The committee boats ventured out to assess the conditions and made the decision to race. At start time the wind was blowing 16 knots at 240 degrees. Only two thirds of the entry about 216 boats decided to venture out to the courses.

On Series A, Events 1-5 were given a 2 lap triangle sausage course and events 6-8 a 2 lap windward leeward.

Following a 40 minute postponement the Fireballs were away first and were led all the way round by Dave Hall and Paul Constable. Next up were the Fast Handicap in which quite a number of the fleet elected not to sail, but the Contender of David Patterson loved the conditions to win comfortably on corrected time. The Flying 15's also enjoyed the conditions and were led home by David Hitchcock and Ian Nicholson after a close tussle with Aphorp/Clarke. In the combined class of Hadron H2, Devoti D Zero and Aero 9 the day belonged to the well sailed Devoti of Thomas Southwell from Lee on Solent. This year the strong Finn entry were led home by Martin Hughes from Warsash. Like the Fast Handicap the Asymmetric fleet saw many stay ashore but not local Hayling boat Theo Galyer who revels in these conditions and did so to take the gun and win on corrected time too. Ben Tuttle and Will Balch in their lively 29er managed the conditions extremely well for a win. A good fleet of RS200's came to the start line but quite a few of them did not read or interpret the SI's correctly and sadly rounded marks incorrectly leading to retirements or DNF's. Louis Johnson and Lucy Hewitson were first to finish but results remained provisional.

Triangles and Sausages were the order of the day for the 7 fleets of the B series events. First start in the frisky 20 knot breeze saw a diverse mix of Medium PY handicap dinghies head west towards HISC clubhouse from the middle of the harbour. A hard beat against the strong tide. 7 of the 12 Laser 2000s battled it out for their own points with Ben Oakley and Barbara Langford taking the win. division.

Good turnouts in both Aero 7 & Aero 5 events were also hard fought with 20 of 45 boats entered making it to the finish line. Special spot prize of the day went to Emma Stokes finishing 6th and sporting the biggest grin at the finishing line of any competitor. Sailmaker Richard Lovering dominated the Solo fleet getting round the three lap course in 60 minutes. All the Solos were to finish within 8 minutes of the leader despite the threatening conditions.

Fireflies have arrived en-mass at Race Week for the first time in many years. It's lovely to see these classic Uffa Fox boats racing 75 years after their first launch in 1946. They also picked up the 'naughty step' trophy for highest number of OCS boats. Edward Smith and Izzy Bretherton took the first gun but with 20 hot boats entered there will be a good battle in this fleet.

RS Fevas were also out in strength, the leaders Will Bailey and Finlay Lomas-Clarke smashed their way round the whole course in 35 minutes. With 32 boats on the entry sheet this will be another exciting fleet to watch as the regatta develops. Finally 4 Tera Sports came out to join in - 60 minutes of tough racing especially for first boat sailors saw special agent Ned Coles in 009 take the gun. Well done to all those who came out to race on a day some were predicting might not even happen with cheeky mid 20s forecast and a lumpy sea left over from yesterday's storm.

Overall, a lively day but a great CHRW opener. Winds were forecast to be lighter for Tuesday, with possibly sunshine – we hope so.

Greg Wells & David Nicolls