

## **Week 18 (Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> August)**

Another force 6 to 7 on the Tuesday evening meant that pursuit racing had to be cancelled again.

However the Sunday morning brought a pleasant force 3 to 4 from the south west, which attracted nine competitors.

A two lap course was set, from the windsurfing channel, with a beat out to a windward mark near the reef protecting the entrance to the bay. There followed a reach down the waves to the “Christmas Pudding” buoy, followed by a run back to the start. This run across the slight swell proved quite tricky, as it was necessary to gybe once to clear the mast at the end of the Amarreurs reef. Some sailors then gybed twice more to gain and clear the downwind mark, which was probably the preferable course. Others stayed on the same tack, but in the gusty conditions this caused some problems.

Simon Gregory was the only formula board sailor, and in the conditions gained two comfortable first places.

In the first race Jo Robinson was a clear second, with Nigel Gale third. Gale almost lost his third place when he dropped his sail just yards from the finish. On a run it is difficult to recover so close to a short finish line, but he just held on to take third by a whisker.

The wind had backed more southerly during race 1, and the start for the second race was moved out to a buoy near the end of the Chouet reef. Even so the first leg was still not a perfect beat. This was compounded when, just after the start, a fishing boat arrived and lifted the upwind buoy. For the first lap competitors rounded the stationary boat (with the buoy on board). I had hoped that the buoy might be replaced, but as the second lap started the boat sailed off with it. Competitors rounded another buoy in the vicinity, and the incident had little effect on the final order of finishing.

This time Nigel Gale took a comfortable second place. Bob Perkins had opened the gate for the start of the race, and with the wind shift this proved a big advantage, as the port tack took him almost to the windward boat/buoy. However Graham Le Page, Jo Robinson and Denis White were hot on his heels, and by the final leg Robinson and Le Page looked set to overtake. Somehow in their eagerness though, they managed to make contact with each other, and both dropped their sails. Perkins was then a comfortable third, with White fourth. Robinson and Le Page had to settle for 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> respectively.

With just three races left to complete this series, the results at the top of the table (after provisional discards) look quite close; the first nine up to now being: Tim Laine 3 points, Simon Gregory 4, Jo Robinson and Nigel Gale 9, Simon Lovell 11, Graham Le Page and Matt Mason 14, Bob Perkins 15, and Denis White 17.