

GBSA Pursuit racing – Third 2009 Series: Races 1 & 2 Thursday 9th July

Early indications of 17 knots of breeze were much reduced by the time racing started and 7 to 10 knots plus a very lumpy sea with the wind direct into the bay were the order of the day.

A four buoy course was set which gave a good beat plus some very broad reaching and running in the lumpy seas.

Seven racers appeared. Simon Gregory fresh from the Island games in Aland could not resist getting back on his formula board with a big sail after all those months of practice on the IMCO. Even his big sail did not help him to overcome his 8 minute handicap though. His handicap is now down to 6, which should make him highly competitive next week.

In the first race Jo Robinson, starting on a 5 minute handicap overtook everyone except Chris Hill who, sporting a 10.5m sail and starting on 1 minute kindly did the correct thing and retired after taking a different route around the course.

In the second race Jo started on 6 minutes alongside Simon Lovell who had mistakenly decided to bring down his 7.4m IMCO sail instead of the 8.5m which the rest of the fleet were sailing. However it did not prove to be the hindrance he thought, allowing him to outpoint Jo and even Denis who is still trying to work out how Simon got past! Simon managed to fend off Jo for the rest of the race and eventually closed on both Chris Hill and Rod Hutchinson just before the finish.....another 100 yards and he might have got a first. As it was he had to settle for third, with Chris first and Rod second. Jo took fourth, with Denis fifth.

GBSA Course racing –Third 2009 Series: Races 4 & 5 Sunday 12th July

Ten sailors arrived to rig up in a gusty south west force 3, which soon increased to a gusty force four to five.

On the high 8 metre tide, a two lap course was set, from a start just off Ladies Bay to a windward buoy near Rouse Pier, a fast reach down to a buoy just past Ammareurs, and a broader reach back to the start.

All ten competitors might have got onto the water, but with the wind making, only seven managed to cross the start line for the first race, and of these only four completed the course.

Simon Gregory, on his formula board, was leading as the fleet approached the end of lap 1, but a combination of a wind hole and weed on his skeg brought him off the plane, letting the rest of the fleet overtake.

At the finish, Nigel Gale was leading Simon Lovell, but crashed out only two or three board lengths from the line. He made a perfectly valid but unorthodox finish using his sail as a flag! As there had been an accidental obstruction by Simon Lovell at the windward buoy, Nigel was placed first with Simon second. Denis White sailed well in the conditions to take third, with Simon Gregory fourth.

In the second race Simon Gregory opened the gate on port tack for the start and never looked back. In the increasing wind he completed the second lap on his formula board before the rest of the fleet had reached the windward mark.

Nigel Gale took a good second place, while Denis White held off Simon Lovell to take third. Simon may have regretted putting up his smaller 7.4m sail, since he could not hold Nigel or Denis on the reaching legs, and had to be content with fourth.

With two races left to complete the series, and after provisional discards, Nigel Gale currently leads with nine points, while Simon Gregory, Simon Lovell and Graham Le Page all have ten. Seb Lovell has twelve, Jo Robinson fifteen, and Denis White sixteen. So the eventual result of the series is wide open, with all depending on the final morning's racing.