

Noble Marine Streaker Nationals 2013 at Northampton SC

Report by Veronica Falat Photo by Karen Langston

A fleet of 47 boats and five very competitive races were the ingredients for an excellent National Championships for the Streaker class on the weekend of 29th-30th June. Northampton SC were generous, friendly hosts and the efforts of race officer Will Gulliver and of the catering team were particularly appreciated, as were the facts that camping was possible alongside your boat and the weather turned out very nice indeed! Continued sponsorship from Noble Marine also contributed greatly to the event's success.

It was dull and damp on Friday when some of the Streakers took advantage of a training session run by Steve Cockerill but by the time racing started on Saturday the sun was out and many competitors were quite sunburnt by the end of the weekend.

Three races were scheduled for Saturday but a tricky breeze meant it was difficult getting the starting line set without too much bias as the breeze shifted one way and then the other. Several times the starts were postponed as the line had to be reset, or there were general recalls, and so it became a long day on the water. However, by the time the fleet came ashore, all three races were complete and it was clear from the results sheet that the championship was, as expected, turning into a battle between the 2012 champion, Tom Gillard, and the 2011 champion, Steve Cockerill. Steve won race 1 with a comfortable lead but Tom worked his way into second place. Races 2 and 3 were both taken by Tom, while Steve managed a 2nd and a 3rd, and so at close of play on Saturday, Tom had a narrow points lead, with Steve second, Ian Jones third, and Ian Fryett fourth.

On Sunday the breeze was considerably stronger but still shifty. Steve won race 4 and so the scene was set for the fifth and deciding race. The start line seemed to be port biased but, almost immediately after the gun, a starboard lift set in, favouring the boats that had started near the committee boat. The fleet charged along, the leeward boats hoping for the wind to switch back and eventually it did and some port-tackers ended up over-standing the first mark, but by this time Howard Frear, who had played the right hand side of the course to perfection, had established a good lead. Tom Gillard was well placed but Steve was in a tight bunch on the reach to the gybe mark. By staying low on the second reach he made up places but Tom was always keeping a close watch on his progress. The two of them were soon locked in a close quarter battle with Tom covering Steve tack for tack. This was a fascinating distraction for the rest of the fleet as these two fought for overall honours. At times it looked like Steve had just managed to squeeze ahead enough to get under Tom's lee bow and force him to tack away but in the shifty, gusty wind it was going to be really difficult for Steve to break Tom's cover. Both were sailing with great skill and intensity but eventually Tom managed to dominate the situation and Steve was forced to accept that the chase was up. While Howard Frear took the race win, a second place for Tom Gillard was enough for him to secure the Championship title for another year.



Tom Gillard covering Steve Cockerill in the final race to secure the Championship

It had been exciting racing for everyone, regardless of where they were in the fleet. It was windy enough for a few capsizes and it was very easy to get the shifts seriously wrong, but there were lots of smiles to be seen when the fleet came ashore for the prize-giving. Butler Boats kindly supplied some extra spot prizes and as usual there were trophies for various categories and race wins as well as the Championship Trophy itself.

Results:

Top 10

		<i>Helm</i>	<i>Club</i>						Total	Nett
1	1851	Tom Gillard	Northampton SC	(2)	1	1	2	1	8.0	6.0
2	1849	Steve Cockerill		1	2	3	1	(5)	12.0	7.0
3	1826	Ian Jones	Dovestone SC	4	3	(6)	3	3	19.0	13.0
4	1803	Ian Fryett	Llandegfedd SC	5	4	4	(8)	6	27.0	19.0
5	1832	Tom Lonsdale	Northampton SC	3	5	(33)	7	7	55.0	22.0
6	1784	Ben Ratcliffe	Scammonden Water SC	6	11	5	(20)	4	46.0	26.0
7	1777	Howard Frear	Sutton Bingham SC	(25)	17	2	13	1	58.0	33.0
8	1776	David Bartlett	Starcross SC	7	(21)	7	5	14	54.0	33.0
9	1800	Oliver Wells	Northampton SC	8	12	(48 DNF)	12	8	88.0	40.0
10	1783	Alan Bennett	Staunton Harold SC	12	10	(32)	9	10	73.0	41.0

1st under 20 years : 1827 Robin Jones (27th overall)
 1st over 45 years: 1849 Steve Cockerill (2nd overall)
 1st over 55 years: 1777 Howard Frear (7th overall)
 1st over 65 years: 1783 Alan Bennett (10th overall)
 1st over 75 years: 1700 Alan Simmons (33rd overall)
 1st lady: 1654 Veronica Falat (11th overall)
 1st Silver Fleet: 1664 Mark Langston (20th overall)
 1st boat over 15 years old: 1448 Matt Whitfield (13th overall)
 Top Club team: Northampton SC
 Best presented boat: 1836 Lisa Moore