

A report of the 2015 Noble Marine Streaker National Championship at WPNSA 3rd-5th July 2015

Report compiled by Veronica Falat. Photos by Karen Langston

Force 4 winds and glorious sunshine greeted the fleet for the 2015 Noble Marine Streaker National Championships at the Weymouth & Portland National Sailing Academy from Friday 3rd to Sunday 5th July. Most of the 48 boat fleet had arrived the day before and all measurement checks were completed before the briefing and so the racing in the class's 40th Anniversary championship started right on time.

Day 1 (report by Ian Bradley)

In Race 1 Tom Gillard led the way off the line with an excellent display of boat handling upwind, and was followed round the windward mark by Ian Morgan and Chris Catt. Down the reach Ian Jones came through from fourth to second, with Alan Gillard in fifth. The order of the first five then stayed the same until the end. Brenda Hoult was in the teens at the windward mark but an excellent downwind leg saw her break into the top ten. It was interesting to see Mark Earley in boat number 129 did well in the breezy conditions, beating some much more modern boats.

In Race 2 most of the leaders from Race 1 went left off the start line. Dave Butler, Jon Aldous and Brenda Hoult went right and that was the order of the first three round the windward mark. Down the first reach Ian Jones worked his way past Brenda Hoult and then on the second reach he got past Dave Butler. On the next beat Tom Gillard worked his way up to the back of the leading group and then went past them on the run to get second place. Ian Jones, Tom Gillard and Dave Butler then led up the beat. Brenda Hoult caught and passed both Dave Butler and Jon Aldous on the second reach and Jon Aldous pipped Dave Butler for fourth place.

Overnight leader after an excellent first day was Ian Jones on equal points with 2nd placed Tom Gillard, 3rd Chris Catt, and 4th Jon Aldous on equal points with Alan Gillard in 5th.



Day 2 (report by Lawrence Creaser)

With a stronger breeze than anticipated, the fleet launched again in bright, sunny conditions to resume the 40th National Championship.

At the start of Race 3, the heavier sailors were champing at the bit to improve their scores from the previous day. As usual, superior boat handling and expert analysis of wind conditions saw the front runners aim for the pin end, heading for Portland Bill. With Ian Jones and Tom Gillard pushing each other hard, sprinting away from the rest of the fleet in their own scrap, it was Tom who emerged at the front of the fleet to take the gun.

After a short break for lunch, Race 4 was started in an ever increasing breeze bringing grins from the likes of Dave Butler who could have been the only sailor not to have touched the kicker! Once again the fleet was well behaved off the start line, with everyone getting away cleanly. Another sailor happy with the increasing wind conditions was Ian Morgan and he and Dave Butler battled constantly upwind; Ian Morgan prevailed and led around the first mark onto the reaches. Meanwhile, behind them Tom Gillard and Ian Jones resumed their battle with even more intensity, both engaged in a luffing battle on all points of course. Despite this, their speed didn't suffer as they once again popped out in front of the fleet. After constant dogfighting all over the fleet, with positions changing at all times, Tom once again took the gun, with Ian Jones following closely behind. Ian Morgan won his battle over Dave Butler coming across the line in 3rd, with Chris Catt in 4th after an impressive display of gutsy downwind sailing.

Race 5 saw the breeze holding its strength as the sea breeze added to the gradient wind, with some tired legs starting to show throughout the fleet. Ian Jones managed to get clear of the fleet after rounding the windward mark in first place. After taking the left-hand side of the course, Tom Gillard found himself having to duck multiple boats, leaving him with a lot of work to do to continue his low scoring. Ian Morgan proved himself to be Mr Consistency on the second day, after another race of duking it out with Dave Butler, coming home in 3rd place once again.

The overall picture at the end of Day 2 saw Tom Gillard take the lead from Ian Jones after a day with two wins and a 2nd place. Below them the top ten had changed drastically, with Ian Morgan piling up the order after discarding a 10th place, with Chris Catt moving down to 4th place after an incident filled final race. The variety of the sail makers in the class is really shown off, with the top 6 all using a different sail maker.

Day 3 (report by James Wilson)

Race 6: The forecast for the day was to start with lighter winds which came as good news to some of the fleet who had been struggling with the stronger winds of the previous two days. Whilst rigging in the shelter of the WPNSA main building, this forecast seemed to be holding true. However, as the fleet took to the water for the penultimate race of the regatta, it was clear that the wind had built to be more than had been forecast. Having behaved for all the previous starts race 7 saw the only general recall of the championship, the slight pin end bias on the line seeming too tempting to pass up. The race started on the next attempt with the two forerunners opting to start at opposing ends of the line. Tom Gillard won the committee boat end of the line but it was Ian Jones (who had started at the pin end) who came out ahead at the windward mark and was able to hold his lead to the finish.

Race 7: With Tom Gillard and Ian Jones both having three firsts and three seconds, each needed to win the last race to take the championship. Unfortunately, due to much commotion at the committee boat end of the line, Ian Jones fell foul to an individual recall which saw him out of contention for the final race. Dave Butler continued to capitalise on the breezier conditions and was the first to make the bear away around the windward mark, closely followed by Ian

Morgan and Tom Gillard. As with the other races throughout the weekend, a lot of very close racing was seen from a pack of boats all vying for a top ten position finish to round off the event. By the end of the last beat up to the finish Tom Gillard had worked his way to another race win which saw him sat firmly at the top of the results to win the 2015 Noble Marine Streaker Class National Championships. Great consistency was shown throughout the top end of the fleet, in particular by Ian Jones who finished 2nd and Ian Morgan claiming 3rd.



2016 National Champion Tom Gillard

From all of the competitors, thanks go to Weymouth and Portland National Sailing Academy for being a fantastic host venue for the past 3 days, and to our sponsors Noble Marine Insurance, and to Butler Boats, ClamCleave, WEST system, Gul, Morgan Sails, Ronstan and Zhik for their generous donations of sailing kit and gear that made it possible for this celebration of 40 years' Streaking to see everyone going away from the party with presents ranging from boom sleeves to watches by way of epoxy repair kits, key rings and sailing knives. Thank you also to Rooster Sailing and Pinnell & Bax for providing perpetual trophies for races 6 and 7 respectively. All agreed that this had been the best Nationals that anyone could remember, with hard fought sailing and an outstanding evening at the Anniversary Dinner, with after dinner speaker David Henshall who spoke on how the Weymouth Single Handed Dinghy Trials led to the creation of our own class.

The top 10 finishers were:

1 st	1926	Tom Gillard	Hayling Island SC	(8 pts)
2 nd	1920	Ian Jones	Dovestone SC	(9 pts)
3 rd	1900	Ian Morgan	Hill Head SC	(20 pts)
4 th	1618	David Butler	Welton SC	(28 pts)
5 th	1696	Chris Catt	Netley SC	(29 pts)
6 th	1703	Jon Aldhous	Beaver SC	(33 pts)
7 th	1832	Alan Gillard	Sheffield Viking SC	(38 pts)
8 th	1914	Mike Hobin	West Oxfordshire SC	(39 pts)
9 th	1923	Lawrence Creaser	Hollowell SC	(49 pts)
10 th	1817	Ian Bradley	Ouse Amateur SC	(63 pts)