

J24 Dartmouth May regatta 14 & 15th May 2022

Mark Lewers, DanJerous When Wet GBR5238



A fleet of 10 J24s met up at Premier Noss-on-the-Dart marina in glorious sunshine and a fair breeze for rigging and launching for the Class event hosted by Royal Dart YC on Friday 13th May - it was good to meet up with friends old and new.

Saturday morning dawned with lovely sunshine and no wind – as forecast. The Race Officer Steve Pocock from Teign Corinthian YC, ventured out into Start Bay in search of breeze, requesting all boats to stay in the marina. 2 AP's followed and racing was abandoned at 3.00 for the day. This allowed the crews to explore Dartmouth town, repair outboard engines and watch the RDYC juniors practicing in their dinghies.

Following a suggestion of a couple of fun un-official races in the mouth of the river Dart, 7 boats assembled for 2 – 2 lap races, dodging moorings, moored boats and trying to avoid a strong river current. Experienced river racers Dave Cooper and James Torr and local sailor Mike Mackie fought it out for the top 3 places in both races, with Dave Cooper bagging the bottle of wine for best combined score. Much fun and some practice was had by all taking part and some entertainment provided for several spectators ashore.

A good dinner and social evening was enjoyed by all at the RDYC – thanks to the catering staff! before some (but not all!) retired in good time for preparation for the strong winds forecast for Sunday.

Sunday started damp, overcast and nicely windy as forecast at 12 – 15knots, gusting 20, with the first race of 3 scheduled for a 10.00 start. All 10 boats made it to the start line, many crew reporting feeling “queasy” after navigating the very lumpy conditions in the mouth of the river. Thankfully the sea state subsided somewhat as the morning progressed. Majic reported 3 cases of sea sickness and 1 more imminent – sadly this greatly hampered the performance of this young and talented crew for the rest of the day.

Race 1 got underway with Dave Hale's Cacoon and Mark Lewers' DanJerous When Wet (DWW) getting the best off the start line, getting round the windward mark well ahead of the rest of the fleet. A quick spinnaker hoist and early jibe tested the crew skills while being rolled around by the waves. Cacoon and DWW kept their positions to finish the 2 lap race in that order, with local helm Mike Mackie's Jiggy taking 3rd.

Race 2 required a moving of the windward mark and re-laying the start line to allow for strengthening tide and veering wind direction –the mark layers doing a sterling job in the conditions! Cacoon again got the best start to lead the whole race and the rest of the fleet tried to chase them down. Several boats failed to appreciate the strength of the tide around the windward mark and any attempt to “short it” were heavily penalised with dismal failure and having to have another attempt! This created much changing of places over the 3 laps but no one could get near Cacoon. Cacoon won, 2nd went to Tim Octon's NJO2 and newcomer Richard Symons's Jolean in 3rd, with the rest of the fleet closely following behind.

Race 3 saw another re-laying of the course – again praise to the mark layers. The wind had strengthened slightly. Cacoon made a good start which made for a similar scene to race 2, the tide at the windward mark caught a few out still as it had changed direction and increased in strength. Cacoon stayed ahead to win, Jiggy took 2nd and Jolean another 3rd place.

Special Thanks to: the Race Officer Steve Pocock, committee boat crew and mark layers – the heroes of the day - for surviving what can only be described as horrible conditions . The Royal Dart YC and event organiser Mike Mackie for putting on a good fun weekend and Premier Noss on the Dart Marina for berthing, crane-age and sponsorship, amidst their extensive re-development program – looking good!

Lastly, great to see 2 new teams joining in with the J24 fleet: Southampton Uni lead by Adam Fermor in NJO3 and Richard Symons with his scratch crew in borrowed boat Jolean – welcome and we hope to see more of you.

