



## Student Match Racing Championships 2019

12 April, 2019



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**Matt Whitfield (Southampton) successfully defends his 2018 title from Murray Hampshire (Exeter) in a dramatic sudden-death last race of five**



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The Royal Yachting Association (RYA), in conjunction with British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS), and the British Universities Sailing Association (BUSIA), held the Student Match Racing Championship on Portland Harbour, supported by RYA Match Racing sponsors, Harken UK, Marlow Ropes and GripTec by Moody Decking. The weekend started on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> April with training for the teams run out of Weymouth & Portland National Sailing Academy. The sixteen teams representing fifteen Universities then assembled at RYA Portland House

for registration and supper, before an early meeting with the Race Management and Umpire teams, followed by three days of intensive sailing.

Day one, forecast for strong winds and rain, only the rain materialised at first. The boats that had been reefed to leave the dock were quickly un-reefed after only one flight so as not to delay the racing too much. Shaking the reefs was enough to poke the wind gods and, fairly quickly, we had 20 knots across the course to keep the spinnakers in the bags and the sailors entertained in the pre-starts. While the wind was up and down all day, it was never down long enough to get the spinnakers out of the bag, as teams got used to the boats and their fellow competitors.



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As is the way in Match Racing, the top ranked teams always face off against the lowest ranked teams, and, on the whole, racing went to the form book, Southampton, Bristol, Edinburgh, Plymouth & Exeter all headed ashore after their first races undefeated, with Newcastle dropping only one race. As the day progressed PRO, Mike Johnson, was aiming to get 16 flights on the board by the end of the day, one more than last year's record of 15 flights. All was looking good for a record-breaking day until just after four o'clock when the wind thought it was time we went ashore and hit the fleet with a 30-knot gust. With only 14 flights in the bag the sailors headed ashore to pack up and head to RYA Portland House for a warm shower and tasty supper.



© Nigel Vick

Day two could not have been more different, 16-20 knots of breeze and glorious sunshine. The sailors made the most of the conditions with full sails and spinnakers the order of the day to test the skills of all involved. The racing intensified throughout the day as the sailors began to meet those with similar experience, and the umpire team led by Greg Eaton, was being kept busy with flags flying all over the place. Generally, racing carried on to form, save for Bristol being beaten by Manchester and Plymouth being taken down by Newcastle.



Umpire Peter Aitken and Event Director Jack Fenwick working out when to schedule the umpires' tea break .....never! Meanwhile, PRO, Mike Johnson is already on the water trying to decide how to get in the 240 races given him by the Event Director to complete the Round Robin!

With the record of 16 flights firmly in Mike's sights, racing continued apace as all other sailors on Portland Harbour headed ashore for the day. With everyone enjoying the glorious conditions so much, racing carried on past six o'clock and a mammoth 19 flights had been completed. At the close of the day Southampton, Edinburgh, & Exeter still remained undefeated, but, with the top six still to meet, the coveted quarter final places were far from secure. The teams headed back to Portland House and rumour has some even ventured to a local hostelry to continue their post-race debriefs in detail.



© Nigel Vick

Day three and there were still seven flights to complete the round robin to determine who would make the semi-finals. Races were fought nip and tuck the whole way around the race course, and it was not uncommon for teams to be offloading penalties and overtaking just before the finish line. Indeed, Southampton nearly broke their winning streak against Exeter 2 when they were called over at the start but fought back to overtake by inches at the finish line. Another team was so eager to get across the line ahead of their opponent that they pumped their mainsheet one too many times and saw their race win disappear when they were penalised.



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The final five flights would see the top six ranked teams face off against each other. Southampton continued their winning streak, taking the first point from Exeter's score line which in turn took a point from Bristol. Edinburgh succumbed to Southampton, Bristol and Exeter, but, with one flight of the Round Robin to go, had done enough to guarantee 4<sup>th</sup> place in the Qualifiers. Indeed, the results were such that the final flight would have no bearing on the seeding for the semi-finals, so racing proceeded without that final flight.



© Nigel Vick

The semi-finals would see Edinburgh challenging Southampton and Bristol up against Exeter. In both, first to two wins competitions, the favourites proved too much for their opponents and Southampton and Exeter progressed to the finals 2-0.

The real action of the day would come in the battles for the top three places. The petit final was another first to two-point playoff and with both Bristol and Edinburgh keen to get their hands on the BUCS medals they levelled the score at one race each. A tough final race saw Bristol take the win and with it third place.



© Nigel Vick

In the final Exeter handed Southampton their first defeat of the competition in race 1. Undeterred Southampton fought back in the second race to level the score. Things were looking good for Southampton in the third as they were set to be close behind Exeter at the windward mark - they had been experts at overtaking all weekend - but a last minute dial down from Exeter saw Southampton handed a penalty which they had to complete straight away; this allowed Exeter to sail clear and take their second win of the final.



© Nigel Vick

Southampton levelled the score again in the fourth race to set up a sudden death last race. The race was hard fought the entire way throughout, but close was not enough as Southampton had picked up a penalty and had to find a way to get rid of it before they could finish. They managed to get underneath Exeter on the final run and push them all the way

downwind beyond the finish line. As they had now sailed far enough from the line Southampton dropped their spinnaker and beat back to the finish line where they could take their penalty around the finish mark and taken the final win, and, with it, successfully defended their 2018 title.

The teams quickly headed ashore to get the boats out and get hold of their shiny new BUCS medals. With so many teams still in the competition on the final day, it was great to see so many of them had stayed around to see who would win and cheer them all on at the prize giving.



Matt Whitfield, Morgan Dibb & Will Birch-Tomlinson of Southampton © Nigel Vick

Retaining his title from 2018, Matt Whitfield (Southampton) said: "The Match Racing Championship was a lot of fun - great sailing conditions, sunny, lovely people, and very happy to have won". Murray Hampshire (Exeter) added: "Really great few days racing in glamour conditions, finishing with a really tight final against Southampton. Gutted to lose, but happy to bring back second for Exeter."



Jack Hanslope, Emma Hattersley & Murray Hampshire of Exeter © Nigel Vick



David Haw, Ella Bennett & Joe Burns of Bristol © Nigel Vick

### Jack Fenwick

Keelboat Development Manager  
Royal Yachting Association

**Final placings, with team membership, bib identification (for the photographs) and BUCS points:**

Place	University	Bib	Helm	Crew		BUCS points
1	Southampton	A	Matt Whitfield	Will Birch-Tomlinson	Morgan Dibb	
2	Exeter	F	Murray Hampshire	Jack Hanslope	Emma Hattersley	
3	Bristol	B	Joe Burns	David Haw	Ella Bennett	
4	Edinburgh	C	Miles Jones	Brendan Lynch	Niamh Harper	
5	Plymouth	E	Ted Blowers	Ross Mackley	Ellie Harding	
6	Manchester	I	James Morson	Philip Aldhous	Jenny Smallwood	
7	Newcastle	G	George Haynes	Josh Dawson	Ana Paterson	
8	Leeds	L	Matthew Lloyd	Lawrence Herbert	Imogen Bellfield	
9	St Andrews	H	Balázs Gecse	Alex Carter	Emily Hill	
10	Strathclyde	D	Sophie Taylor	Chloe Whitton	Jake Miller	
11	Loughborough	M	Abby West	Will Bedford	Hamish Eckstein	
12	Exeter	J	Sophie Otter	Freddie Liardet	Rob Giardelli	
13	Bath	P	Merrick Stanley	Alex Whitfield	Esmé Shepherd	
14	Solent	K	Christian Hülß	Robert Kerley	Nicole Ames	
15	Leeds	N	James Allison	Samay Mellor	Jess Hodge	
16	Bangor	O	Harry Bowerman	Russell Vernon	Molly Nixon	

**Results:**

Semi-Final				Flight 41	Flight 42	Flight 43
Semi Final 1 - Match 1	RR4	v	RR1	C v A	A v C	v
Semi Final 2 - Match 2	RR3	v	RR2	B v F	F v B	v

Final, Petit Final	Flight 44		Flight 44	Flight 45	Flight 46	Flight 47	Flight 48
Petit Final - Match 2	LSF2	v	LSF1	B v C	C v B	B v C	
Final - Match 3	WSF2	v	WSF1	F v A	A v F	F v A	A v F v A

**Round Robin:**

Skippers:	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Total	Posn.
Matt Whitfield	A		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	14	1
Joe Burns	B		1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	12	3
Miles Jones	C	0	0		1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11	4
Sophie Taylor	D	0	0		0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	6	10
Ted Blowers	E	0	0	1			0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	5
Murray Hampshire	F	0	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	13	2
George Haynes	G	0	0	0	1	0		0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	8	7
Balázs Gecse	H	0	0	0	0	0	1		1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	7	9
James Morson	I	0	1	0	1	1	0	0		1	1	0	1	1	1	1	9	6
Sophie Otter	J	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0		1	1	0	1	1	1	6	12
Christian Huelss	K	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0		1	0	1	1	0	4	14
Matthew Lloyd	L	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0		1	1	1	1	7	8
Abby West	M	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0		1	1	1	6	11
James Allison	N	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		1	0	1	15
Harry Bowerman	O	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	16
Merrick Stanley	P	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1		4	13

Ties were broken for 13/14th and 11/12th based on who beat who in the RR. ties for 5/6th and 10th were based on average points scored per match.

News throughout the event and many videos of the races were posted on:  
RYA Match Racing FB group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/356553504445646/> and on  
British Keelboat Sailing FB group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/356553504445646/>

All official Notices and documentation are posted on:  
BUSA Match Racing Championship page: <https://busa.co.uk/championships/bucs-match-racing-championship-2019>

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His full gallery may be found at: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/jMq9BVPLwvakKbCq8>



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