



British Universities and Colleges Sport Match Racing Championship 2018



© Nigel Vick

Southampton Champions, with Bath and Bristol in the medals



© Nigel Vick

The British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS), in conjunction with the Royal Yachting Association and the British Universities Sailing Association (BUSA), held the Universities' Match Racing Championship on Portland Harbour, supported by Harken UK, Marlow Ropes and GripTec by Moody Decking. The weekend started on Friday 6th April with training for the teams run out of Weymouth & Portland National Sailing Academy. The eighteen teams

representing eighteen Universities then assembled at RYA Portland House for registration, before meeting the Race Management and Umpire teams.



© Nigel Vick

Event Director, Jack Fenwick, describes each day's sailing.

Day 1: The longest day in UK Match Racing

With light winds forecast for the day, PRO John Burgoine, was always going to have a challenge on his hands getting in the required 45 races over 15 flights. Group A took to the water first with early wins for Swansea, Bristol and pre-event favourites Southampton. At the half-way stage Southampton suffered a shock defeat to Bristol which used a slight gain at the start and a persistent shift in the wind to hold off the Southampton attack. By the end of the group, Bristol were undefeated, with Southampton in second having only having lost to Bristol.

Group B took to the water as the breeze completely shut down, but the look of frustration in the competitors quickly turned to joy as a beautiful 8-10 knot westerly breeze filled in and the teams enjoyed the best sailing of the day. Edinburgh, Bath and Loughborough took the early wins in this group, but, with tight racing, anyone could be taking the next two places in the Quarter finals. In the end it was Bath who qualified through undefeated, with previous champions, Loughborough taking second place.

RYA BUCS/BUSA Student Match Racing Championships																													
Group A							Group B							Group C															
Skipper	A	F	G	L	M	R	TOTAL	Posn.	Skipper	B	E	H	K	N	Q	TOTAL	Posn.	Skipper	C	D	I	J	O	P	TOTAL	Posn.			
Matt WHITFIELD	A		1	1	1	0	1	4	2	Tom WILLIAMS	B		1	1	1	1	1	5	1	Murray HAMPSHIRE	C		1	1	0	1	1	4	2
Ben SWYER	F	0		1	1	0	0	2	3	Mathieu CADEI	E	0		1	1	0	0	2	4	Niall HOUSTON	D	0		1	1	1	0	3	4
Balazs GECSE	G	0	0		1	0	1	2	4	Michael STARKIE	H	0	0		0	1	0	1	6	Sophie TAYLOR	I	0	0		0	1	0	1	5
Ben LAWRENCE	L	0	0	0		0	1	1	5	Tom GOODBOURN	K	0	0	1		0	0	1	5	Ted BLOWERS	J	1	0	1		1	1	4	1
Joe BURNS	M	1	1	1	1		1	5	1	Miles JONES	N	0	1	0	1		0	2	3	Robbie KING	O	0	0	0	0		0	0	6
Ruby RIGGS	R	0	1	0	0	0		1	6	Alex PHILPOTT	Q	0	1	1	1	1		4	2	Toby MORSLEY	P	0	1	1	0	1		3	3

Group C thought they were in for more of the same glamorous racing, but the weather gods thought differently. With Plymouth, Exeter and Cardiff taking the early wins, the breeze started to fade as the cloud cover rolled in over Portland Bill. The Race Management team pulled out

all the stops and squeezed in the final four flights to conclude stage one just after six pm, with old rivals Plymouth and Exeter tied on four wins, each taking the next two quarter final places. The teams headed back to Portland House for Supper and a Q&A session with the umpires before retiring after a long day.

Day 2: “How can there be less wind.....”

With the first six quarter finalists decided, the remaining twelve teams were going to have to fight it out in two groups for the last two places in the knockouts. The wind did not want to play ball, but John and his ARO (wife Ann, who really runs the racing), ably assisted by some of the competitors, squeezed in races whenever they could.

By lunchtime only three flights had been run, but Ben Lawrence from Warwick was the only team with straight wins, and, while a discussion took place as to whether the group should be cut short to move to the next group, the wind filled in and the final two flights were completed. Unfortunately for Warwick, they suffered their first loss to Newcastle in the fourth race and, having won their last race, had to watch as Newcastle took the win in their last race and the Quarter Final place on a tie break.

Group B took to the water, but hurrying up and waiting was still the order of the day. Durham, Exeter and Solent took the early wins in really tricky conditions, but it still took two hours to squeeze in three flights. With a need to get the quarter finals underway the difficult decision was taken to curtail Repechage B, but, being undefeated, St Andrew’s Balazs Gecse took the final Quarter Final berth.



© Nigel Vick

Despite best efforts to get the first pair of Quarter finals complete only one more flight took place before Portland Harbour looked more like a mirror than a world class sailing venue. Bristol’s Joe Burns and Bath’s Tom Williams continued their undefeated streaks to lead the quarter finals 1-0 over St Andrew’s and Newcastle respectively. At the same time the first of the playoffs took place pitting Cambridge’s Robbie King against Cardiff’s Toby Morsley with Cambridge taking the win and Cardiff the “wooden spoon”

Another quick supper and Q&A with the umpires at Portland House followed sunset.

Repechage A										Repechage B									
Skipper	E	F	H	I	L	P	TOTAL	Posn.		Skipper	D	G	K	N	O	R	TOTAL	Posn.	
Mathieu CADEI	E		1	0	0	0	1	2	5	Niall HOUSTON	D		0		1		0	1	5
Ben SWYER	F	0		1	1	1	1	4	1	Balazs GECSE	G	1		1		1		3	1
Michael STARKIE	H	1	0		0	0	1	2	4	Tom GOODBOURN	K		0			1	1	2	2
Sophie TAYLOR	I	1	0	1		0	0	2	3	Miles JONES	N	0				1	1	2	3
Ben LAWRENCE	L	1	0	1	1		1	4	2	Robbie KING	O		0	0	0			0	6
Toby MORSLEY	P	0	0	0	1	0		1	6	Ruby RIGGS	R	1		0	0			1	4

	Skipper		Skipper	Winner
Quarter - Final 1	Balazs GECSE	v	Joe BURNS	
Quarter - Final 2	Ben SWYER	v	Tom WILLIAMS	
Quarter - Final 3	Alex PHILPOTT	v	Ted BLOWERS	
Quarter - Final 4	Murray HAMPSHIRE	v	Matt WHITFIELD	

Day 3: “Of course, with the wind comes the rain.....”

Portland Harbour finally delivered on the final day of racing, a solid breeze, albeit with a dose of drizzle to accompany it, gave the sailors some great racing. With some of the playoff sailors deciding that studying should take priority over sailing, the playoff schedule was reduced, giving back the time lost the previous day. With the attention signal firing off bang on time, the racing got underway and just as promptly Bath and Bristol secured their places in the semi-finals. In the playoffs, the Scottish East vs. West rivalry was settled with Strathclyde’s Sophie Taylor beating Edinburgh’s Miles Jones to take 11th Place.



© Nigel Vick

The second group of quarter finals saw Loughborough’s Alex Philpott beating Plymouth’s Ted Blowers, and Southampton’s Matt Whitfield beating Bristol’s Joe Burns to lock down the final two Semi-final places.

In the Semi-finals, Bath and Southampton, who had been looking comfortable throughout the entire event, continued their winning ways claiming their spots in the final 2-0 each.

In the petit-final, Joe Burns, in his first match race event as helm, secured third place for Bristol with a 2-0 over Loughborough.



© Nigel Vick

In the final, the two skippers were fighting all the way. Whitfield took the first race to lead 1-0, but Williams answered decisively, winning the next two races to take the score to 2-1 in Bath's favour. Squaring up to the pressure, Whitfield levelled the series at 2-2 to take the final to a one match decider. Whitfield controlled the start and led up the first beat. With the breeze shifting right, Williams was just not able to get past, and Southampton took the championship 3-2.

What the sailors said....

Balázs Gecse of St Andrews explained that "for us the level of competition on the BUSA events is way higher than what we faced here in Scotland. We find it a really great opportunity not only to improve as sailors, but also to get to know other university students in the UK sharing the same passion as we do.



© Nigel Vick

"St Andrews has never been to any BUCS events before this year, so it was hard for us to estimate in advance how we could do in the competitions. We just wanted to give our best, while having fun, and we ended up finishing 6th in the MR after achieving the same result in

the Yachting Championship too. The team is really satisfied with the results, and we managed to identify our weaknesses, on which we will work in the future.

“The next year, we would, definitely, like to go back to these events and try to aim for a podium position, and we will also try to take a team to some international events if we can find sufficient sources of funding.

“My experience in match racing is not too great; I would rather consider myself to be a fleet racer. However, I really enjoy match racing, and I am super keen to learn more about it. In Hungary, I competed on some fun match racing events, but here the level of competition is much greater, providing me and the team plenty of opportunity to improve.

“For us the biggest difficulty in terms of match racing is to organise high standard training in Scotland, but this is something we will work on in the future, and we hope we can get more and more teams involved”.



© Nigel Vick

Tom Williams of Bath admitted, “yes, we were sad not to get the win, but, all things considered, it was another great result for Bath. It is the final year for myself and the rest of my team, so was quite a special moment.

“As with previous years, there were a number of good teams present at the BUCS finals, foremost of which was from Southampton. Bath progressed through to the finals in straight wins, which was excellent, given we hadn’t competed for a year.

“The finals then provided some excellent match racing and, despite the final result, was a very enjoyable end to the event. Being our fourth straight year in reaching the semi-finals and beyond, we are huge fans of the BUCS Match Racing Championships and wish it received more attention and more regular BUCS events over the year.

“A big thanks to the umpires and event organisers who make these events possible. Each year we attend, we are always impressed with the quality of the event and how smoothly it runs, and truly appreciate the opportunity to compete.”

Alex Philpott of Loughborough also admitted that “it was a bit of a knock getting beaten 2-0 by Bath in the semis, but they were the better team. We picked ourselves back up and were hungry for that bronze medal going into the match against Bristol. A tactical decision by me at the leeward mark unfortunately gained them an inside overlap, and then they were able to cover us up the second beat. The second race we were in that dangerous follow-in position in the light breeze and didn’t get a great start. From then on Bristol were able to dictate the race. We were very pleased coming fourth but as ever, it’s a bitter pill to swallow!”

Matt Whitfield of Southampton (and BUSA Captain) gave his take on the weekend, which “was light, making the racing a game of snakes and ladders. With a full and busy schedule, we needed to be racing in some very tough conditions where it would have been easy for the RO to abandon racing, but we pushed through to complete the schedule.



© Nigel Vick

“With the league system it meant that, as a team we had plenty of time off the water, which was filled with uni work – or, in our case, an attempt to play golf as we were inspired by Masters; it did not end well, with many mis-hit shots. I think we will stick to sailing.



JJ Marie, Matt Whitfield & Tom Darling Southampton: © Nigel Vick

“It was really good racing all weekend and, in particular, on the Monday with the finals against Exeter, Bristol and Bath. All races were nose-to-tail the whole way, leading to some nervous moments all around the course.

“I would like to express my greatest thanks to my crew of Tommy Darling and Jack Muldoon for providing the tools to perform as well as we did!”



Bath: Jack Preece, Tom Williams & Owen Bowerman © Nigel Vick



Bristol: James Clemetson, Joe Burns & Ed Haynes © Nigel Vick

Running a bigger championship – is it worth it?

Jack Fenwick concluded: “With the last two years’ Match Racing Championships being oversubscribed, we had a strong desire to increase the capacity of the event AND get more racing in for the majority of the sailors. We set an incredibly ambitious schedule, and the RYA is forever indebted to the Race Management team of John and Ann Burgoine, not only for their tireless efforts to get as many races in on the long days, but also buoying the spirits of the umpire team with an almost endless supply of cakes. And, of course, we wouldn’t be able to get close to the standard of racing without the efforts of the umpire team of Tricia Neri, Liz Procter, Steve Procter, Nick Rusbridge, Nigel Vick, Alan Baser and their Chief Umpire, Greg Eaton.

“I like to think it was worth the effort and look forward to seeing who will be the champion in 2019”.

The full results are uploaded on the BUSA website Championship page at:
busa.co.uk/championships/bucs-yachting-championships-2018

Special thanks to umpire and photographer, Nigel Vick for his great images –
Nigel Vick’s gallery of photos can be found at:
https://photos.google.com/share/AF1QipMzNZQxpQukB2yrKHhMAPBfDV_Kp0Zhy-F0tpnS1lpBlmvMUcS_hWze_xH9lhHDcA?key=OFVGMU1BV0FOa3RCYjBic2Fhdi1qSEk2QXg4Qzh3

The event was followed on Facebook at RYA Match Racing
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/356553504445646>

To follow BUSA through the year, see www.facebook.com/groups/busasailing.

See Summarised Result, BUCS points and Teams below.

Summarised Result, BUCS points and Teams

Result	INSTITUTION	BUCS points	World Sailing Number	World Sailing Ranking	SKIPPER	CREW	CREW
1	Southampton	20	GBRMW91	51	Matt Whitfield	JJ Marie	Tom Darling
2	Bath	14	GBRTW47	181	Tom Williams	Owen Bowerman	Jack Preece
3	Bristol	10	GBRJB167	0	Joe Burns	James Clemetson	Ed Haynes
4	Loughborough	7	GBRAP77	730	Alex Philpott	Oliver King	Zak Bermon
5	Exeter	5	GBRMH123	174	Murray Hampshire	Jack Hanslope	Emma Baker
6	St Andrews	3	HUNBG4	391	Balazs Gecse	Henry Cross	Alexander Carter
7	Plymouth	2	GBRTB66	744	Ted Blowers	Ross Mackley	Nick Williams
8	Newcastle	1	GBRBS46	488	Ben Swyer	Thomas Clayton	George Haynes
9	Warwick		GBRBL10	729	Benjamin Lawrence	Matt Duckett	Tim Haines
10	Durham		GBRTG32	964	Thomas Goodbourn	Rebecca Eno	Huw Edwards
11	Strathclyde		GBRST74	659	Sophie Taylor	Philipa Benson	Jose Aroca
12	Edinburgh		GBRMJ44	0	Miles Jones	Hugh Braidwood	Joanna Barrie
13=	Swansea		GBRRR40	0	Ruby Riggs	Sarah Jarmin	Rhiannen Massey
13=	Nottingham		GBRMS127	623	Michael Starkie	Connor Hodgson	Will James
15=	Birmingham		GBRNH54	326	Niall Houston	Harry Gilchrist	George Zavos
15=	Solent		SUIMC6	284	Mathieu Cadei	Nicole Ames	Chris Hulß
17	Cambridge		GBRRK24	0	Robbie King	David Robertson	Hugh Tomkins
18	Cardiff		GBRRM133	0	Toby Morsley	Duncan Jamieson	Hanna Brant

