



**British Universities
and Colleges Sport**

**British Universities'
Sailing Association**



7 April 2019

Finals Preview



Finals 2018 on Strathclyde Loch @ Robbie Fowler

British University Team Racing Championships 2017



Finals 2018 on Strathclyde Loch @ Leanne Fischler www.leannefischler.co.uk

The best university team racers head to Spinnaker this week for the BUCS Championship Finals

The Finals of the annual Team Racing Championships of the British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) and British University Sailing Association (BUSA) will be held at Spinnaker Sailing Club from Tuesday 9 to Thursday 11 April 2019.

This is the culmination of an academic year's selection, training and competition. In February, the largest team racing event, probably worldwide, was simultaneously held over five venues across the UK. 540 sailors, in over some 90 university teams, competed in Qualifiers. Four of these covered English and Welsh universities, at four venues: Derwent Water, Grafham, Spinnaker and *Chew Valley*. In Scotland the event was the third in a series of 'League' weekends held between December and February at Bardowie Loch and on the Tay (planned events at Forfar having been iced up – inside and outside!). From these five events, 20 teams qualified direct to the Finals. A further fifteen teams went forward to Playoffs, held on Derwent Water, to find a further seven teams to go forward to the Finals. The 28th team invited to Finals is the winning team from the Irish Intervarsities, held in March



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The story of the qualifiers this year certainly saw some challenging weather. A few days before the event snow hit the south west of England – affecting the road system and effectively preventing access to Chew Valley SC, so that the Western Area Qualifier there had to be postponed, to what turned out to be much more favourable conditions a couple of weekends later. The South-Central and the other Qualifiers did proceed.

The Area Coordinator at Spinnaker just made it in time for the start of racing, with a last batch of boats in tow from Winchester, where the snow had moved through from the south-west on Friday night.



Towing to Spinnaker



Racing starts at Spinnaker



Early start for Newcastle volunteers launching at Derwent Water

Meanwhile, the Scottish second League Weekend, a week earlier, had had to be altered at short notice when not only the loch, but the club house, at Forfar had been found iced up; with all the ensuing logistic challenges, boats and RIBs to be moved to the always hospitable Royal Tay YC for the second and third weekends. For the veteran Scottish PRO, Robyn Fitzgerald (3 years as PRO + 2 as RO) the challenges were not done, with the tides of the Tay to contend with, especially in league 2. At least tides should not be a consideration for her as she comes south to take change of racing at the Finals.



Racing off the start line at the Midlands Qualifier
© Francis Treherne-Pollock (Cambridge)



Underway at the Northern Qualifier
© Henry Fenton

Ailsa Muskett, Scottish Student Sailing (SSS) Communications Officer and Aberdeen University Sailing Club (USC) writes of the third and final Scottish League: “started bright and breezy, so breezy in fact that after a Dundee guinea pig (the hosts at this event) was sent out, but became rather wet and tired, the decision was made that it was too windy and to head to the clubhouse to watch the rugby for day 1. He following day, with a short postponement for the wind to kick in, the boats launched to finish the rest of league 3. Strathclyde Pink and St. Andrews Pink were proving formidable opponents for Edinburgh Blue, which until this league had been undefeated. It was a 3-way battle between Aberdeen Blue, Glasgow Yellow and Strathclyde Yellow for the last two Playoff places in Gold fleet.



Scottish League 3 at the Royal Tay YC © Ailsa Muskett

“At the end of league 3, Edinburgh Blue were no longer undefeated. University of the Highlands & Islands Purple, in a disappointing turn of events won their silver league, but, due to not qualifying for BUCS, were unable to move up, leading to a playoff between Dundee Red and St. Andrews Yellow, before Dundee

moved up into Gold. Thanks to the clear blue skies and favourable wind, this allowed the fourth league to kick off, with an angry Edinburgh ready to claw back their winning streak, an ecstatic Dundee Red being in Gold fleet for the first time and UHI ready to keep the hold of their win in Silver Fleet.

“Due to the excellent conditions of the day, all the races could be completed. In the fading light, it was decided to have a race between the Race Committee and Edinburgh Blue. Who would be better, the current winners of the Scottish qualifiers or the team made up of (some) ex-Edinburgh sailors and with over ten years’ experience in team racing? After a very close fought race with the sudden and unexpected 1st going to the student team, it was Edinburgh Blue who took the win”.



Loughborough Purple vs Kent Black at the Midlands Qualifier
© Barnes Battison of Loughborough University

Karen Thomas, Midlands Area Organiser, of Cambridge wrote: “The forecast for the weekend looked promising, with the snow subsiding and more wind forecast on the Saturday. Upon arrival PRO Tim Palmer made the decision to rig all flights with cut down sails and racing got underway. As the wind started to creep up, RIB changeovers became more interesting and two universities battled it out for the top 4 spots (Cambridge & Birmingham). Racing was paused for the day at race 68 with everyone looking forward to the promise of lighter and more stable winds the following day.



Racing on Derwent Water for the Northern Qualifier © Henry Fenton

“With the top 10 teams only a few wins apart, there was a lot to play for on the Sunday and several teams vying to be in the select few to progress further in the national competition. With lighter winds, 77 more races were completed bringing all to 16 races”.



Derwent Water at its best for the Northern Qualifier © Henry Fenton

George Haynes, Northern Area Coordinator, of Newcastle wrote: “Racing got underway early on Saturday morning at a very snowy Derwent Reservoir. The wind remained consistent for the whole day, and with few incidents to hold up racing, PRO Sean Clarkson was able to run 72 races. Overnight, the results were very close, and a few races into day 2, there was a 6-way tie for first place. It was all still to play for!



Close action at the Northern Qualifier © Henry Fenton

“Day 2 was forecast to be much windier, so the decision was made to rig the cut-downs. Even with this, there was still enough wind to blow a couple of less fortunate sailors over. However, with racing still running efficiently, we made it through a further 54 races, putting each team on 14 races. The results were still

extremely close, with 4 teams contending for the final spot in the top 4; the remaining 3 now qualify for the National Playoffs”.

Nicole Ames, of Solent, the South-Central Coordinator for the last two years, wrote: “PRO Phil Hagen was pleasantly surprised to see the arrival of teams bright and early.



“However, the Area Rep [Nicole] had been victimized by the snow with the final boat in tow in Basingstoke on Friday night. With a blustery start to the day, racing continued until sunset, in the hopes of getting in as much racing as possible due to the low winds forecast for Sunday. 62 races were completed, just short of the 70 the PRO wanted, after a brief off the water hearing, leading to a slight delay getting the races running back to back.



South-Central Qualifier © James Tomlinson

“Day 2 arrival at the lake prompted a lovely picture to be taken. However, it was soon to be discovered that the whole, entire lake was frozen over (a massive rarity for the southerners). Much to the delight of the helpers it meant they could take the jaffas out and go break the ice.



Ready for action at South-Central Qualifier © James Tomlinson

“The afternoon then prompted some great racing and brilliant conditions. Racing finished at 15:20 with 100 races in the bag. The weekend turned out to be a great success”.



South-Central Qualifier © James Tomlinson

So, with the Qualifiers and Playoffs completed, training and competing in the many inter-university hosted events on the Calendar, the teams should be at prime performance levels ready for this week's Finals.

The 2018 top ten were: Southampton Green, Cambridge Blue, Exeter Blue, Imperial Blue, Strathclyde Green, Cambridge Black, Manchester Purple, Bristol Red, Oxford Blue and Southampton Red. All these achieved direct entries to Finals through the Qualifiers this year, except Oxford Blue, which led at the Playoffs, so gaining its place. Newcastle, Birmingham, Cardiff, Durham, Edinburgh, Manchester, St. Andrews, Sheffield, Plymouth and Southampton Blue also achieved Finals places direct. Loughborough Purple, Bath Blue, Exeter Black, London White, Bath Black, Nottingham Green qualified through Playoffs. And University College Dublin (UCD), the winners of the Irish Intervarsities 2019, makes up the 28-team Championship Finals.



Scottish PRO, Robyn Fitzgerald (akaPTO(secco), celebrating the completion of the three Scottish League weekends will be leading the race team for the Spinnaker Final © Ailsa Musket

Meanwhile, the organisers have been hard at work for many weeks to make all the preparations. BUSAs Technical Directors, Chris Lindsay and Emily Robertson, have been working closely with the host club, Spinnaker Sailing. Teams of volunteers from across the country have been recruited, a race team to be led by Robyn Fitzgerald established and an international umpire team to be led by Jon Napier, together with Jury Chair, Andy Wibroe, is in place. A Media Team led by Izzy Burroughs of Glasgow will keep us all informed.

All the best to all the competing teams and may everyone at Spinnaker have a great Championship.

Follow the Finals:

The official BUSA Championship page for all Notices and documentation:
<http://www.busa.co.uk/events/bucs-team-racing-championships-2016-17>

Follow the event on BUCS Team Racing Championship 2019 Facebook :
<https://www.facebook.com/BUCStrChamps2019> @BUCStrChamps2019
and on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BUSASAILING> @BUSAsailing

- where there will be frequent blogging, and, subject to the technology, commentary and video/drone streaming.

Live Results and other information will be posted on: <http://events.ksail.co.uk/2019/BUSAFinals/>

There will also be links and some coverage on
BUSA Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/BUSAMedia/> @BUSAMedia
BUSA Sailing Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/busasailing>



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