



British Universities and
Colleges Sport

Team Racing 2014



Press Release

31st January, 2014



Action at the BUCS/BUSA Team Racing Championships 2013 at Chew Valley SC © Tony Mapplebeck

500 British student sailors aim to qualify for the 60th British Student Team Racing Championships

83 student teams, representing 36 British universities, are competing for places at the 2014 BUCS/BUSA Student Team Racing Championships. Most will be racing at venues around the British Isles this coming weekend, with the Northern group of universities meeting the following weekend (to accommodate the tide timetable!)



Firefly fleet on the Marine Lake at West Kirby Sailing Club for the 2012 BUCS/BUSA TR Champs © Tom Churchill

University sailing clubs (USCs) have been busy training, selecting and competing since the beginning of the current academic year, last October. Team racing is one of the disciplines of student sailing, together with fleet, match and keelboat yacht racing. Clubs also make an increasing contribution to bringing newcomers into sailing, organising learn-to-sail training and facilitating a variety of sailing-related training and qualifications. But Team Racing is particularly popular in universities because of its exciting and sociable sailing format, as a team of sailors work together to try and establish an overall winning combination for their team over their opposition. Team races are fast and furious and reward good starting, boat speed, boat handling, rules knowledge and team work skills. Most university sailing clubs organise sailing at least once a week at a local sailing club, often two or three times a week, arranging team race training and, in many cases, taking team racing skills to a high level of performance,



Action at the BUCS/BUSA Team Racing Championships 2013 at Chew Valley SC © Tony Mapplebeck

University sailing clubs compete with each other throughout the academic year, organising events themselves across the British Isles. Many familiar names appear in the calendar year-by-year. The Leeds' Halloween Howler, Sheffield Shuffle, Oxford Magnum, Brummy Bender, London 6-Pack, Cardiff's Welsh Dragon, Bristol Brew, Loughborough Lemming and Warwick Turtle have already been held this year.



Leeds' Halloween Howler 2013 © Tony Mapplebeck

Further events, still to come this year, are the Wessex Winter Warmer, Cam Cup, Nottingham Snakebite, Brunel Badger, Oxford Top Gun, Exeter Excalibur, London Duck, the Big Lash (Liverpool and Manchester), Hallam Hangover and, returning this year, the Swansea Spartan. As some of the titles may imply, these events provide a vital social element, as well as competition, for student sailors who enjoy a wide social network. But this does not imply any lack of seriousness when it comes to competition on the water; focus is intensive!



Hallam Hangover 2013 © Tony Mapplebeck

Scottish Student Sailing organise three 'league' weekends providing inter-university team racing north of the border, which provide preparation for the open Scottish Team Racing Championships as well as qualification for the BUCS/BUSA Championships. After the first two on Bardowie Loch, this weekend's deciding weekend is being held in Aberdeen. The Scottish Championships, under the umbrellas of Scottish Student Sailing and RYA Scotland, are to be hosted this year by Aberdeen University Sailing Club at Aberdeen & Stonehaven Yacht Club. Aberdeen USC is making especial efforts to encourage entries from south of the border and across the Irish Sea.



BUCS/BUSA Championships 2012 on the Marine Lake at West Kirby SC © Tom Churchill

But the overall aim for most USCs is to qualify for the BUCS/BUSA national Team Racing Championships, which are held each year in April. This year the Championships will be hosted by University of Strathclyde Sailing Club and held on the 200 acre Strathclyde Loch from Sunday 6th to Tuesday 8th April 2014 (Strathclyde Loch has extensive facilities and has previously been the rowing venue for a Commonwealth Games and the 1996 World Rowing Championships).

In order to compete on Strathclyde Loch, university teams need to qualify. The first opportunity for English and Welsh universities is at a weekend of Qualifiers, whilst the Scottish universities achieve their places over their three League weekends. These events will be held this weekend as follows:

- Universities of Aberdeen (three teams), Dundee (3), Edinburgh (3), Glasgow (3), St Andrews (2) and Strathclyde (3) meet for their final League Weekend on Loch Ore (Fife).
- Loughborough (3), Birmingham (3), Cambridge (3), Nottingham (3) and Warwick (2) will compete at Grafham Water Sailing Club
- Imperial, Oxford (3), Reading, Southampton Solent (2), London, Portsmouth (3), Southampton (3) and Surrey will be at Spinnaker Sailing Club
- Cardiff (2), Swansea (3), Bristol (3), Exeter (3), Plymouth (3), the University of the West of England (UWE) and Bath head for Chew Valley Sailing Club

Meanwhile the Northern universities, Bangor (2), Durham (2), Lancaster, Newcastle (3), Sheffield Hallam (2), Leeds (2), Liverpool (2), Manchester (3), Sheffield and York (2) will be awaiting more favourable tides on the Marine Lake at West Kirby Sailing Club on 8/9 February 2014.



BUCS/BUSA Championships 2012 on the Marine Lake at West Kirby SC
© Tom Churchill

The top four teams at each of these “area” Qualifiers will proceed to the Championships, together with four from the Scottish Leagues. Teams ranked 5th, 6th and 7th in each “area” will be eligible to compete at “Playoffs” to be held on 1/2 March 2014 hosted by Birmingham University Sailing Club, from which a further seven teams will qualify for the Finals. An Irish student team will also be invited to the Championships on Strathclyde Loch from 6th to 8th April.



BUCS/BUSA 2013 TR Champions - University of Bristol © Tony Mapplebeck

Many women student sailors also compete in all-student and in open teams at the BUSA and RYA Ladies' Team Racing Championships respectively. These will be held this year at West Kirby SC on 22/23 February.



2013 BUSA Ladies' Team Racing Champions, University of Cambridge © Nigel Vick

Team Racing is taken pretty seriously by student sailors, and several university teams compete in open competitions, including the RYA (UKTRA) Team Racing Championship (this year to be held at Spinnaker SC on 22/23 March). University teams, including a BUSA team, usually compete in the internationally renowned, Wilson Trophy – the British Open Team Racing Championships - on the Marine Lake at West Kirby SC (this year from 9 – 11 May).



Day 2 at the Wilson Trophy 2013 © TimPiper www.juicephotography.co.uk

For now, the priority for the 36 competing British universities is to see their teams qualify for the British Student Team Racing Championships.



2013 BUCS/BUSA TR Champs Medallists: Oxford – Bristol – Cambridge

© Tony Mapplebeck

BUSA Chairman, Phil Derry says, "The BUSA Team Racing Championships is one of the largest team racing competitions in the world, and, in the Championships' 60th year, it is fantastic to see such strength and depth in university sailing. To have over 80 teams and 500 sailors competing at four separate Qualifier events this weekend across the UK (with the Northern Qualifier to be held next weekend) is unprecedented, and a true indication of the talent and passion for sailing that exists within our member clubs. Such a formidable organisational task requires hard work and dedication from many people, and my thanks go out to all the BUSA Committee members involved in making the Qualifiers (as well as all other BUSA events, including Team Racing Championship Playoffs and Finals) a success, in particular the Area Reps and their event organisation teams.

"Finally I'd like to wish all sailors competing this weekend the best of luck: race hard, race fair and above all enjoy yourselves!"



Medallists, 2012 Championships: Southampton & Oxford © Tony Mapplebeck

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