



**British Universities and
Colleges Sport**

**Team Racing
Championship 2014**

Preview



5th April, 2014



Action at the 2013 Team Racing Championships, Chew Valley Water SC © Tony Mapplebeck

60th British Student Team Racing Championship gets underway on Strathclyde Loch

The elite of British university team racers, 128 of them, arrive at Strathclyde Loch, 28 teams representing 21 universities. today to compete in the British Universities and Colleges Sport Team Racing Championship Finals. Organised by the British Universities Sailing Association in conjunction with the University of Strathclyde Sailing Club, this is the culmination of an academic year's preparation of training, selection and inter-university events hosted by different university sailing clubs. It follows a rigorous series of League weekend (Scotland), Qualifiers (England and Wales) and U.K. Playoffs, in which 500 student sailors (83 teams), representing 36 universities, have competed to gain a coveted place in the Finals.

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 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, not only for its exciting and sociable sailing format, but because it combines concentration on tactics and sailing skill as a team of sailors work together to try and establish an overall winning combination for their team over their opponents. 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,

USCs 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, Imperial Goldfish, Sheffield Shuffle, Glasgow Grouse, Oxford Magnum, Brummy Bender, London 6-

Pack, Cardiff's Welsh Dragon, Bristol Brew, Loughborough Lemming, Warwick Turtle, Wessex Winter Warmer (Southampton), Cam Cup, Nottingham Snakebite, Brunel Badger, Oxford Top Gun, Exeter Excalibur, London Duck, the Big Lash (Liverpool and Manchester), Hallam Hangover and the Swansea Spartan. As some of the titles may imply, these events provide a vital social gathering, as well as competition, for student sailors who enjoy a nationwide social network. But this does not imply any lack of seriousness when it comes to competition on the water; focus is intensive!



Action at the Leeds' Halloween Howler 2013 © Tony Mapplebeck

In addition to Glasgow's own Grouse, Scottish Student Sailing organise three 'league' weekends providing inter-university team racing north of the border, as well as qualification for the BUCS/BUSA Championships.



League Weekend 2 on Forfar Loch 2013 © Leanne Fischler

A fully illustrated report on 2013 -14 by **Ruth Cannell-Whiteley** can be found on the BUSA website: http://www.busa.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2014/03/14SSSleagues_FinRpt_iPics.pdf.

Edinburgh Blue, Strathclyde Blue, St Andrew's Pink and Strathclyde White qualified for the BUSA Finals, while Dundee Black, Edinburgh White and Glasgow Black gained places at the U.K Playoffs, at which Glasgow Black also qualified for the Finals, very near home! In addition, under the aegis of Scottish Student Sailing, Aberdeen USC hosted the Scottish Team Racing championship in March, won by the University of Strathclyde.

So, the overall aim for most USCs is to qualify for the BUCS-BUSA national student Team Racing Championships, which are held each year in April. For English and Welsh universities, this means competing in one of four Qualifiers held in areas of the country and organised by BUSAs Area representatives and host university sailing clubs. These were held in February and March at Grafham Water SC (hosted by Cambridge), Spinnaker SC (hosted by Southampton), Chew Valley SC (hosted by the

University of the West of England) and Pennine SC (originally planned for West Kirby SC, but winds and tides prevented it; thanks to Area rep, **Bex Dawkes** and Sheffield Hallam Commodore, **Sean Clarkson**).



Close attention from the umpires at a tight mark rounding at the Nottingham Snakebite 2014 © David Eberlin

The weather and tides in the early months of 2014 were challenging, to say the least. They had an impact on the Qualifiers held on the first weekend of February, and both caused a double postponement of the Northern Qualifier, originally on 8/9 February and then 15/16th at West Kirby SC, eventually held at Pennine SC in March.

Two reports give a flavour of these events.

Josh Flack, BUSA Midlands Area Rep. (Cambridge) reported from the Grafham Qualifier: "...Racing got underway shortly after 10am on Saturday in breezy conditions, which began to build soon after. 24 races were squeezed in by lunchtime, with several teams still unbeaten, before it became too gusty even for cutdowns. The PRO made the sensible call to send everyone home early to watch the rugby!



Midlands Qualifier on Grafham Water © Neil Bray

".....With about 70 races left to complete the round robin, racing began in slightly lighter conditions on Sunday, although cutdowns were still in use. By lunchtime, the state of play was becoming clearer, with Loughborough White and Cambridge Blue still on 100% wins, and Warwick Black, Cambridge

Yellow, Cambridge Pink and Nottingham Pink pushing for the other two automatic spots. Birmingham Blue and Nottingham White were looking set to scrap it out for the final playoffs spot. The crucial Cambridge-Loughborough match was close all around the course, and was eventually decided on the finish line when Loughborough were awarded spins, giving Cambridge a 1, 4, 5. Those teams were eventually joined, after a few nervous moments, in the top four by Warwick Black and Cambridge Yellow. Nottingham White beat Birmingham Blue in a crucial decider for the last playoff place, and so join their Pink teammates, and Cambridge Pink at playoffs in a few weeks time”.

Jilly Darling, Western Area rep. (UWE) reported from Chew Valley: “7:30 am and the sun was just coming over the Mendips when the UWE team unlocked the gate at Chew Valley and began to prepare for the BUSA Western Qualifiers. One saving grace is that for the first time in the 3 years UWE has ran the event, there is no ice to be seen. However, the forecast was for the wind topping off at 39 knots, so perhaps we had other worries. As the 96 sailors arrived.....(for) the obligatory bacon buttie,...(the RO) called for us to wait for the front to arrive, and thus the racing was delayed. The sailors settled in to table football and table tennis while the event organizers sat in the bar studying meteorological websites. 12 came and went with no sign of the front and so the call was made for the boats to launch. There was much hesitation from the sailors but three boats eventually launched into the conditions, the wind gauge was reading 20 knots in the club house, but it became clear that the boats were fighting against much more than that as one firefly continually capsized and flipped. The remaining 15 boats quickly decided that it was not for them and remained ashore. It seemed that the wind had risen as the lake now looked like a class 4 river rapid! After a discussion with the umpires on the water a decision was made to call the boats back, not as easy as it might seem! With some help from the ribs the three boats returned to shore, sailors fine if a little damp, we played the waiting game again”. By 2pm the decision was made that there would be no sailing that day, all could hurry home, except Swansea who had already settled into the bar to watch the rugby.



A race starts at the South-Central Qualifier at Spinnaker SC © Nigel Vick

“As the sailors arrived for day two the boats were all lined up and cut downs prepared, UWE were out on the water laying the course and the wind was perfect! Jon had declared that it was unlikely we would achieve our 105 races in one day; I’m not sure what the record for most in a day actually is but it was deemed impossible! So we aimed for 75 in order that everyone had 10 races. The teams were sent out on cutdowns, which was greeted warmly as, although it went light in some areas, when the gusts hit everyone was thankful of the reduced sail area. With the change-over area being a fair distance from the start line, the races trudged along, but by lunchtime we had 30 completed and were feeling good. The racing was going well, and the Bristol teams seemed to be dominating. A few breakages one after the other delayed the racing a bit, and the wind had died meaning that the change-overs were taking a bit longer, but thankfully they were still ticking over. After 75 we had only one re-sail and the final results were through at 16:50.... Bristol had two teams qualify (Red winning 100% of their races and White, losing only 3), Exeter Black and Cardiff Black finished with 9 and 8 wins respectively under their belts. The three teams to make it through to the playoffs were; Plymouth Pink, Exeter Blue and Bristol Black”. Somehow, between Leagues and Qualifiers and Playoffs and Finals, the RYA & BUSA Ladies’ Team Racing Nationals 2014 took place on 22/23 February at West Kirby.

This was evidently a terrific success for all the fourteen teams that competed, especially for the winners, Birmingham. Their report was almost as much fun as the event: <http://www.busa.co.uk/british-women-celebrate-great-team-racing-and-a-fun-weekend-birmingham-uni-scoops-both-rya-and-busa-honours>.



Ladies' Nationals 2014 at West Kirby SC © Philip Shepherd



The RYA and BUSA Team Racing Champions 2014 – University of Birmingham © Philip Shepherd

The University of Birmingham played host to the BUSA Playoffs 2014 on 1/2nd March on Bartley Reservoir, with 15 teams making a final attempt to qualify for the Finals. Birmingham Commodore, Abi Griffiths wrote: “Despite having hurricanes all winter, there was barely a breath of wind upon arrival on Saturday morning.... Unfortunately, the famous 10 knot Bartley sea breeze stubbornly refused to fill in all day, making racing extremely slow and hard, although there was hope that the sheer number spins given for breaking rule 42 would be enough generate a few extra knots.

Yet despite the tough conditions, a mammoth effort from umpires, racers and the Brum volunteers made it possible to get through 42 races in the day, no mean feat considering it took an hour and a half to get past race 14! Cambridge Pink finished the day at the top of the table, and needless to say we were all very appreciative of the teams for their patience during the umpteen periods of postponement, and a special thanks to the umpires for re-laying the course what seemed like every other race.



“(Un?)fortunately Sunday’s forecast proved to be accurate; gone were the clear blue skies and mild temperatures (and even sunburn for a some...!); instead, we were treated to a cold and wet, but blissfully windy, day, so much so that cut-downs were used for all of the day’s racing. Once again a massive effort from everyone involved, despite more than a few sore heads, meant that the remaining 63 races were completed in plenty of time!”



Day 2 at the Playoffs on Bartley Reservoir © Leanne Fischler

The upshot of all this activity is that the following teams are due to start racing at the Finals on Strathclyde Loch tomorrow: Bristol Red & White, Cambridge Blue, Pink & Yellow, Cardiff Black, Durham Purple, Edinburgh Blue, Exeter Black, Glasgow Black, University College Dublin (Irish University TR Champions 2014), Lancaster Red, Liverpool Purple, Loughborough White, Newcastle White, Nottingham Pink, Oxford Blue & White, Portsmouth Black & Purple, Southampton Blue & Red, Southampton Solent Black, St Andrews Red (Pink), Strathclyde Blue & White, Swansea Green and Warwick Black.



The Championship Finals are being 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. It is to be the venue for this year’s, Glasgow 2014, Commonwealth Games 1500m open-water swim in the Triathlon.



Team Racing on Strathclyde Loch @ Niall McLeod

So, who to watch:

Bristol Red: James Grant, Abbie Page, Phillip Sparks, James Duncalfe, Cameron Douglas, Grace Fell
Bristol White: Oliver Porter, Hannah Lennox, Imogen Smith, Lucy Hartely, James Poyner, Emma Spruce
Cambridge Blue: Arthur Henderson, Tom Maxwell, Tim Gratton, Lilly Carlisle, Josh Flack, Francine Counsell
Cambridge Pink: Chris Young, Katrina de Lange, Bryan Ormond, Esther Sidebotham, William Reid, Ben Hendon
Cambridge Yellow: Robbie Gilmore, Katherine Sammes, Hugo Sloper, Sarah Lombard, Christopher Eames, Helmi Burton-Papp
Cardiff Black: Harry Derbyshire, Emily Wiltshire, Matthew Wallis, Sarah Alton, Charlie Cox, Tom Hammond
Durham Purple: Guy Dixon, Elizabeth Ellison, Matthew Goodbourn, Eve Smith, James Cunnison, Robert Tolcher
Edinburgh Blue: James Logan, Helen Gallagher, Mark Taylor, Ruth Thomson, John Beardon, Pierce Peck
Exeter Black: Tarra Gill-Taylor, Ella Whitley, Jason Saints, Louise Latham, Jordan Saints, Meia Harnett
Glasgow Black: Peter Collings, Muireann O'Regan, Emily Robertson, Liane Cameron, Andy McKeown, Shona Ross
Ireland (UCD): Simon Doran, Jen Dolan, Philip Doran, Bella Morehead, Conor Murphy, Eimear McIvor
Lancaster Red: Thomas Daniel, Katie Leveridge, Claire Page, Luke Williams, Hannah Fagg, Morgan Bromhead
Liverpool Purple: Tom Piggot, Olivia Reeves-O Toole, James Crampton, Charlotte Hooton, Ben Baker, Anna Langford
Loughborough White: Connor Miller, Amelia Gibbons, Michael Matthews, Sarah Roberts, Jack Scullion, Abby Doherty
Newcastle White: Thomas Goodey, Frederic Bell, Andrew Brown, Katey McElroy, Rory Mackenzie, Millie Pryke
Nottingham Pink: Sophie Shephard, James Beer, Issy Hamilton, Toby Hodge, Charles Talbot, Lucy Childs
Oxford Blue: Ben Gratton, Benjamin Rahemtulla, Philip Derry, Kathryn Twemlow, Guy Stephens, Catherine Cherry
Oxford White: Georgia Trapp, Amy Sharkey, Alistair Macaulay, Meli Besse, Tom Steavenson, Edward Scallan
Portsmouth Black: Peter Newbery, Oliver Clark, Tim Carter, Lucy Best, Fergus Barnham, Joan Furness
Portsmouth Purple: Christopher Rust, James Jopling, Harry Houlding, Josephine Kimber, Josh Ridley, Nick Sutton
Southampton Blue: Jamie Diamond, Fred Hayes, Hannah Tilley, Kerry Worsfold, Tom Ballantine, Henry Mason
Southampton Red: Callum Ellis, Emily Nagel, Hannah Jones, Ian Gill, Nick Upton, Millie Alcock
Southampton Solent Black: Tom Lovesey, Sebastian Patton, Bruno van Dyke, Filip Sochaj, Christopher Tiernan, Megan Fletcher
St Andrews Red (Pink): Sarah Alexander, Julia Scott, Ben Wilcox, Rachel Offer, Andrea Gusmitta, Ellie McCourt
Strathclyde Blue: Alison Morrish, Ewan Rycroft, Angus Gray-Stephens, Callum MacIver, Theo Hoole, Natalie Cameron
Strathclyde White: Peter Cameron, David Cooper, Ross Stanley-Whyte, Eilidh Bruce, Angus Marshall, Niall Ferguson
Swansea Green: Tom Walker, Ben Ashley, Tom Pain, Paula Foscarini, Jaimie Whiteley, Reuben Murphy
Warwick Black: Hermione Stanley, Jenny Kasper, Thomas Needham, Sarah Kent, Ben Mackely, Elspeth Keating

How to follow the action at Strath Loch?

Try the Technical Delegates blog at: <http://www.busa.co.uk/events/championships>. They must be right!

For more informal stuff, and links we pick up, follow: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/busasailing>

Also, of course:

BUSA on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BUSASAILING>

BUCS/BUSA TR Champs Finals: <https://www.facebook.com/events/189716437906277>

And there is even more to come. In case you have any doubts about the enthusiasm of student sailors at U.K. universities for team racing, how seriously it is taken, several competed this year in the RYA (UKTRA) Team Racing Championship at Spinnaker SC on 22/23 March. University teams, including a BUSA team, will compete in the internationally renowned, Wilson Trophy – the British Open Team Racing Championships - on the Marine Lake at West Kirby SC from 9 – 11 May.

But, first, we will be back with the story of the British Student Team Racing Championship 2014!



What its all about...Nottingham Snakebite 2014, Notts County SC © David Eberlin

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