



**British Universities and
Colleges Sport**

**Team Racing
Championships 2014**



Press Release

11th April, 2014



Action on the morning of the last day © Marc Turner

Cambridge Blue victors at 60th British University Team Racing Championships

The culmination of a year of training and competition, through Qualifiers, Scottish Leagues and Playoffs, involving 500 sailors in teams from 36 universities, 168 of the elite of British university team racers came to Strathclyde Loch, hosted by the University of Strathclyde Sailing Club, from 6th to 8th April for the Finals of the 60th British Universities and Colleges Sport Team Racing Championships (BUCS) 2014. The event was organised by the British Universities Sailing Association (BUSA), in conjunction with Strathclyde USC.



Views from the Racing Control tower © Sean Clarkson

There were three days of intense competition during which the 28 university teams sailed hundreds of races in a league system, leading to quarters, semis and finals on a brilliant last day of team racing. Hard fought, and gripping to the very end for the spectators and the hundreds following the event commentaries on-line. Cambridge Blue emerged as Champions, having been

taken to the full five races in the Finals by 2013 Champions, Bristol Red. In the Petit Final, Oxford Blue won the final race to take the 3rd place in the Championships, with Exeter Black in 4th.



Action on the first day © Moritz Troll, University of Strathclyde SC

A live, interactive, on-line Event Blog, together with constantly updated individual race results, racing schedule and round summaries, giving cumulative positions, was mounted on the BUSA website (in addition to information being supplied to the competitors' marquee). The conversation on the blog and commentaries on several of the races, especially detailed in the semis, petit final and final, were provided by the Technical Delegates, Jon Napier and Tom Churchill (BUSA Vice President) and BUSA Team Racing Coordinator, Sean Clarkson, from the vantage point of the Race Control tower. The following report on the racing at the event was prepared by **Tom Churchill**, together with **Sean Clarkson** for the petit final.



Action on the first day © Moritz Troll, University of Strathclyde SC

“Sailing often comes down to the finest of margins. Just one mistake can end the hopes and dreams of any budding sailor, and the BUSA Team Racing Championship 2014 proved this point. Two incidents, one in the semi and one in the final, will end up as the defining moments and images of this year's championship, a black flag and a capsized.

“The BUCS/BUSA Team Racing Championship is the pinnacle of student sailing, and for every student sailor handling the coveted Thompson Trophy is a goal which none but a few will ever succeed in doing. This year 28 teams converged on Strathclyde Loch for the event of the team racing season. All of those

teams had sailed through Qualifiers, and some been to Playoffs, to get this far, and the pressure and tension was palpable on the first morning of competition. On the first day, the weather conditions did nothing to help these nerves as huge gusts rolled in, enforcing the use of reefed sails. On the second day, completely the opposite greeted the sailors, when racing was abandoned early due to a lack of wind. But on the final day, with tension at its most high, the wind came good. Although shifty, it provided excellent conditions in which to team race.



Into a start on the final morning © Marc Turner

“The Championships run on a Swiss league format, which, for all its complexities, is relatively simple, where winners sail winners and losers sail losers. This process will keep going until teams are roughly sorted, and then the top eight fight it out in knock-out stages.



Action on the last morning © Sean Clarkson

“Throughout the early rounds it was clear that Bristol Red were going to be the team to beat, going undefeated over the first two days of competition. Other teams were close behind. Oxford Blue, Cambridge Blue and Exeter Black all performed well throughout the league and managed to secure themselves a spot in Tuesday’s knock out stages. The other places in the knock outs were not so clear cut and were subject to the infamous Swiss league bounce-effect (where teams’ positions in the league can rise and then fall at just the wrong time). One team that benefited from doing well at just the right time was Warwick Black. Warwick Black made a late surge on the final day of competition, bouncing up into the knock out stage.

“In the knock out stages the format is simple - the first to two wins goes to the next stage. There were some interesting matches thrown up, with local derbies and rivalries taking centre stage. But Bristol Red, Oxford Blue, Cambridge Blue and Exeter Black, who had led the league throughout the event, prevailed and went through into the semi finals. The first semi-final saw Bristol comfortably defeat Exeter Black in two straight races to book their place in the Final.



Action on the final morning © Sean Clarkson

“The other semi-final, which saw Oxford Blue take on Cambridge Blue, had hopes for one team fade in the form of a ‘black flag’ incident. Oxford Blue took an early lead on the first beat leading up to the first mark. But within the blink of an eye, a spinning Oxford boat made contact with a Cambridge boat and caused the Cambridge crew member to dive into the Oxford boat to avoid going for a swim. The umpires raised the black flag to place the result of the race under post-race review. Oxford Blue won the race, but, after a hearing by the umpires, it was decided that Oxford had gained an advantage from the incident and the race result was reversed. The second race was much less dramatic as Cambridge Blue took full advantage of a mistake at the leeward mark by Oxford to secure a berth in the final.”



© Alan Henderson www.fotobot.com

The Petit Final saw a battle for 3rd place between Oxford Blue and Exeter Black, losers of the two semi finals. Similarly, this was the first to two wins. **Sean Clarkson** reports on a match for which he did the live commentary. “In race 1 the fleet split up, with four boats taking the right side of the course and the other two battling it out on the left of the course. At the windward mark Oxford were in control, positioned in 1,2,5. At the leeward mark Exeter managed to sneak into 1st place, but still left Oxford in

control. Up the beat to the finish Oxford made the most of the gusts and pulled back 1st place, winning the race on the line. In race 2 Oxford again took the lead at the windward mark, having a comfortable 1,2,4. However, one of the Oxford boats received a 720° spin at mark 2, which allowed one of the Exeter boats to sail way ahead in 1st place. Oxford just could not keep up with Exeter's pace, who were positioned in 1,2,6 up the final beat to the finish. On the line Exeter took a comfortable 1st place, and an overall race win.



A race on the last morning © Alan Henderson www.fotobot.com

“Heading into the 3rd race it was all to play for, with the teams having one race win each. On the start line Oxford had a clear lead, positioned in 1,2,3 off the line, with one of the Exeter boats trailing a long way behind the line. At the windward mark Oxford still had the lead, positioned in 1,3,5. By mark 2 the Exeter boat that had been stuck behind had caught up, requiring a neat mark trap by one of the Oxford boats to stop them gaining 5th place. The positions held until the final beat, where Oxford managed to squeeze out the Exeter boat in 2, placing Oxford in 1,2,4 heading to the finish. On the line it was a very messy finish, but Oxford were the winners of race 3, giving them 2 out of 3 wins. This meant Oxford finished in 3rd place overall and Exeter in 4th place overall in the Championships”.



One of the Final races between Bristol Red and Cambridge Blue
© Alan Henderson www.fotobot.com

Tom Churchill summarises the Finals. “On the shore, as the boats left the jetty for the final, there was a feeling that Bristol Red were favourites to defend their title as reigning Champions. But in the first race Cambridge looked secure throughout and took a 1-0 lead in the first to three wins final. Shore opinion did not falter and Bristol stayed strong taking the next two races to go into the lead a 2-1.

There was now a must win race for Cambridge Blue, and every gybe and every tack counted. In the 4th race Bristol Red were winning and everything was looking positive (even the fat lady was warming up her voice).



© Alan Henderson www.fotobot.com

“But after all the preparation and training even the best sailors can capsize, and Bristol Red suffered from a lapse in control as their boat went over. Cambridge Blue went on to take the race and level the score at 2-2. In the final race, Bristol Red fought hard, but it was evident that the capsize and consequent loss, had caused them to lose momentum. Cambridge Blue ruthlessly took the final race, showing how small mistakes can change the course of a championship. Cambridge Blue were worthy winners and take the title of BUCS Team Racing Champions 2014”.



BUCS Team Racing Champions 2014 – Cambridge Blue © Sean Clarkson

The overall results of the Championships, together with the leading teams, are scheduled at the bottom of this report and may be found on the BUSA website. In addition to the award of the Thompson Trophy to the Champions, Cambridge Blue, BUCS medals were presented to all the podium sailors. Coveted BUCS points were won by the top eight teams to carry home to their Sailing Clubs and Athletics Unions. What do BUCS points mean? BUCS points mean funding! So, the following BUCS points are awarded:

Top 8 teams:	BUCS Points
1 Cambridge Blue	50
2 Bristol Red	35
3 Oxford Blue	24
4 Exeter Black	16
5 Portsmouth Black	14
6 Cambridge Pink	12
7 Warwick Black	10
8 Bristol White	8

Arthur Henderson, Captain of Cambridge Blue said: "Coming into the event we had had good preparation in the run up, including performing at events like the RYA Team Racing Championship, so we definitely wanted to win. The first two days didn't go exactly to plan, but we knew all we needed was to progress to the finals, so weren't too worried. The final beat of the final race was very tense, and it was a relief to see it over the line. We are all very happy that we managed to bring it together after a lot of hard work throughout the year. We would like to thank BUSA and Strathclyde University, and everyone who helped, for pulling together a fantastic event in a lovely location. We had a fantastic time, and it couldn't have been more exciting".

James Grant, Captain of Bristol Red, generously responded: "Congratulations to Cambridge on winning as they sailed well in the final. We now look forward to the Wilson Trophy in a few weeks time".



This Cambridge boat seems pretty happy after their final Final win
© Alan Henderson www.fotobot.com

Oxford Blue's Captain, **Ben Gratton** added: "Definitely pleased to medal again, perhaps not the colour we were aiming for, but all six of us felt that we sailed really well across the three days and that it was just a couple of little things that didn't quite fall in the end. Very keen to get our own back at Varsity/the Wilson!

"The event was well run with particular credit needing to go to the RC for getting through as many races as they did during the Swiss League stage in what were some very trying conditions. Also impressive was the small army of helpers (I assume from Strathclyde University, but there might have been some other sources as well) which meant that nobody ever had to rig or launch a boat in the morning; you simply arrived at the lake, got changed, stepped in from the pontoon and went. The boats themselves were in good condition and we didn't lose much (if any) racing due to breakages. We had the full range of conditions which made the event a bit more varied than the hiking marathon last year!"

Other sailors, watching the semis and finals from the 'grandstand' on the shore in front of the marquee added their own comments. Tom from Swansea said, "...cracking time!.....Scotland didn't rain as much as it could have done". Anon. of St. Andrews commented: "Well run, effective change-overs, very good event". Sophie Shephard of Nottingham Pink thought..."great location.....Fun nights out!". Cardiff's retiring Commodore, Emily Wiltshire said: "Great organisation, clear, well laid course", while a Loughborough sailor thought it was "really well organised. Themed nights were really fun". And the subsequent comments on university sailing clubs' Facebook pages bore all this out.

BUSA Treasurer and Joint Technical Delegate, Jon Napier, had introduced an on-line Event Blog at the 2013 Championships. This year, this was expanded, and Jon was joined by Tom Churchill, and Sean Clarkson, who acted as commentators, encouraged a live conversation, and fed in continuous race results, schedules and table updates after each round. As the tension mounted, especially in the semis, petit final and final, there was great excitement. Over 500 people logged into the blog, both in the UK and Ireland and elsewhere, with over 3000 visits were recorded over the three days.



A great last day for spectators on the marquee grandstand © Marc Turner

Comments from on-line guests included: "Top quality coverage from you guys at BUSA! A welcome distraction from revision and lectures!".... "Thanks guys for great company and commentary over the last few days - makes the tension bearable when you know others are suffering too!".... "So exciting!!! Brilliant to have this to follow - not quite like being there, but fantastic all the same"..... "Switzerland: from another lake further away, I loved it. Thanks for the great coverage...."..... "Team racing on the internet. Great entertainment".... "Thanks for the feed, been a great distraction #LibraryCheerleaders".



Action on the first day © Moritz Troll, University of Strathclyde SC

Summing up the event, Strathclyde's Commodore, **Theo Hoole** (taking a break from returning 36 fireflys and 6 RIBs to their usual homes) said how "pleased Strathclyde have been able to host the event and grateful to all the competitors who came. We hope they all enjoyed it!"

Strathclyde graduate and Scottish Student Sailing member, **Niall McLeod**, the Event Director commented: "Personally I was very happy with how the event went and was pleased to have been asked back to help my old club. The weather didn't really play ball on Sunday or Monday, but we had great conditions for the final day, which was a big relief. A big thank you has to go to everyone who helped out, not just at the event, but also before and after in getting everything ready, especially all the boats that needed to be moved to the loch and then taken back. The event is more than just three days for all the helpers! I was also delighted to see the two Strathclyde teams doing well (although I was obviously completely impartial). I think to be able to pull off the event and have two teams competing well shows the strength of the club at the moment". Theo Hoole added an especial thanks to Paula Kellett who organised all the catering and managed the PR in the marquee, "I think she doesn't want to see another roll for quite a while! She did a fantastic job given the lack of facilities".

The University of Strathclyde Sailing Club thanks everyone who was involved in making this 60th Anniversary event one to remember! The sponsors: North Lanarkshire Council and Summer Sail Week; supporters: RYA Scotland, Scottish Student Sport and the Strathclyde Sports Union, together with and those who kindly provided firefys and RIBs: Clyde Cruising Club and Dinghy Section, Royal Northern and Clyde Yacht Club, the 29th Glasgow Explorer Sea Scouts, and the University Sailing Clubs of St Andrews, Dundee, Glasgow and Edinburgh.

BUSA wish to pay particular tribute to the Race Officials and Umpires, together with the Race Control team, and to the hosts, the University of Strathclyde Sailing Club, including their Event Director, Niall McLeod and Paula Kellett. As Jon Napier blogged: "@StrathSail has done a very slick job with organising racing this weekend. Great event".

Results:

- | | | | | | |
|----|-------------------|--|--------------------|----|------------------|
| 1 | Cambridge Blue | Arthur Henderson & Tom Maxwell, Tim Gratton & Lilly Carlisle, Josh Flack & Francine Counsell | | | |
| 2 | Bristol Red | James Grant & Abbie Page, Phillip Sparks & James Duncalfe, Cameron Douglas & Grace Fell | | | |
| 3 | Oxford Blue | Ben Gratton & Benjamin Rahemtulla, Philip Derry & Kathryn Twemlow, Guy Stephens & Catherine Cherry | | | |
| 4 | Exeter Black | Tarra Gill-Taylor & Ella Whitley, Jason Saints & Louise Latham, Jordan Saints & Meia Harnett | | | |
| 5 | Portsmouth Black | Peter Newbery & Oliver Clark, Tim Carter & Lucy Best, Fergus Barnham & Joan Furness | | | |
| 6 | Cambridge Pink | Chris Young & Katrina de Lange, Bryan Ormond & Esther Sidebotham, William Reid & Ben Hendon | | | |
| 7 | Warwick Black | Hermione Stanley & Jenny Kasper, Thomas Needham & Sarah Kent, Ben Mackely & Elspeth Keating | | | |
| 8 | Bristol White | Oliver Porter & Hannah Lennox, Imogen Smith & Lucy Hartley James Poyner & Emma Spruce | | | |
| 9 | Cardiff Black | 16 | Loughborough White | 23 | Edinburgh Blue |
| 10 | Portsmouth Purple | 17 | Durham Purple | 24 | St Andrews Red |
| 11 | Newcastle White | 18 | Southampton Red | 25 | Solent Black |
| 12 | Swansea Green | 19 | Ireland (UCD) | 26 | Glasgow Black |
| 13 | Strathclyde Blue | 20 | Strathclyde White | 27 | Liverpool Purple |
| 14 | Oxford White | 21 | Nottingham Pink | 28 | Lancaster Red |
| 15 | Cambridge Yellow | 22 | Southampton Blue | | |



BUCS Medallists at the 2014 BUCS Team Racing Championships © Sean Clarkson

Several competitors, having already competed in the 2014 BUCS Match Racing Championships on Portland Harbour the previous weekend, will now be joining their yachting teams for the 2014 BUCS Yachting Championships in the Solent this coming weekend.

Full results may be found on the BUSA website: www.busa.co.uk.

Follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/busasailing and Twitter: @BUSASAILING

Acknowledgements:

Tom Churchill, Sean Clarkson and Paula Kellett all contributed significantly to the preparation of this report.

Strathclyde's **Maritz Troll** and Sheffield Hallam's **Sean Clarkson** took many excellent photographs, including those close-ups much beloved of taggers. These are all posted on BUSA Sailing Facebook:

www.facebook.com/groups/busasailing.

Two professional photographers were at the event on the final day:

Alan Henderson www.fotoboat.com and **Marc Turner**: www.pfmpictures.co.uk.

We are particularly grateful to them for furnishing us with copies of some of their images, which are copyright, for editorial use.

Fotoboat's gallery may be visited at:

<http://fotoboat.photoshelter.com/gallery/BUSA-Team-Racing-Finals-Strathclyde-Park/G0000sAAV13a6SVw/C00002SWPnpr4qiE>

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