



**British Universities and  
Colleges Sport**



**Match Racing  
Championships 2015**

## Press Release

22<sup>nd</sup> April 2015



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### **Connor Miller's Loughborough team win the Championship**

The annual round of British student sailing championships – fleet, team, match and yacht racing – concluded last weekend with the British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) Match Racing Championship 2015, organised by British Universities' Sailing Association (BUSA), in conjunction with the Royal Yachting Association (RYA).

Fourteen teams, representing the Universities of Bath, Bristol, Cardiff, Durham, Exeter, Loughborough, Newcastle, Plymouth, Southampton (Black & Red teams), Southampton Solent, Surrey, Swansea and York, raced over three days on Portland Harbour at Weymouth & Portland National Sailing Academy in the RYAs fleet of Elliott 6m yachts.

With so many Universities entered, the teams had to be split into two groups for the Qualifying round with the initial plan being that the top three from each group would progress to the quarter finals and the next three from each group going in to a repechage to decide the final two places. The initial groups were:

Group A	SKIPPER	Helm	ISAF Ranking
1	Southampton Red	Annabel Vose	87
4	Surrey	Andrew Wishart	402
5	Southampton Solent	Matt Reid	633
8	Cardiff	Rory Davis	0
9	Durham	Guy Dixon	0
12	Newcastle	Ben Swyer	0
13	York	Rebekka Thomas	0

### Group B

2	Loughborough	Connor Miller	95
3	Southampton Black	Tom Harrison	123
6	Bristol	Stevie Beckett	
7	Swansea	Alex Benbow	
10	Exeter	Martin Evans	
11	Plymouth	Neil Marshall	
14	Bath	Thomas Williams	

Jack Fenwick reported in detail on the racing (from the vantage of his umpire's RIB) and filled us in at the end of the Championship.

By the end of the first day the race management team, headed up by Richard Kingsnorth, had given the teams 11 flights (33 races) and completed the round robin for group A. Annabel Vose from Southampton had finished top in her group winning all her races, with Matt Reid from Southampton Solent finishing a strong second; indeed in the match between the two teams the race was decided on the finish line as Vose had managed to push Reid away from the finish so she could take a penalty, but he managed to sneak past only to let victory slip away as his boom hit the finish mark. Group B would have to wait until the next day to finish their round robin, but Connor Miller from Loughborough was looking strong, having won all of his races.



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After a long day on the water, it was time to head back to RYA Portland house for supper and a debrief on the day's plays by the umpire team led by BUSA President Peter Johnston and BUSA Treasurer Jon Napier.

But Saturday brought high winds and a long wait ashore before racing got underway and the evening report came in: "Despite a long wait on shore to see if the wind would drop below 25 knots, racing finally got underway just before 4 o'clock. With the wind still around 20 knots and gusts of 25, the Race Committee took the wise decision to race without spinnakers.

"The testing conditions saw much action and penalties in the prestart, with one team even ending up with a black flag. Connor Miller continued his winning ways to finish top of group B, with Tom Williams from Bath chasing hard in second. With the loss of racing today, the planned repechage had to be cancelled, and the top four teams from each group went straight through to the quarter finals. It was to be an early night for the quarter finalists so that they're fresh for the start, an hour earlier, tomorrow".

**Series 1: Round Robin Results**

<b>GROUP A</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Posn.</b>
Annabel Vose (Southampton Red)	<b>1</b>		1	1	1	1	1	1	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>
Andrew Wishart (Surrey)	<b>4</b>	0		0	1	0	1	1	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
Matt Reid (Southampton Solent)	<b>5</b>	0	1		1	1	1	1	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
Rory Davis (Cardiff)	<b>8</b>	0	0	0		0	0	1	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>
Guy Dixon (Durham)	<b>9</b>	0	1	0	1		1	1	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>
Ben Swyer (Newcastle)	<b>12</b>	0	0	0	1	0		1	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>
Rebekka Thomas (York)	<b>13</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0		<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>GROUP B</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Posn.</b>
Connor Miller (Loughborough)	<b>2</b>		1	1	1	1	1	1	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>
Tom Harrison (Southampton Black)	<b>3</b>	0		1	1	1	1	0	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
Stevie Beckett (GBRSB66)	<b>6</b>	0	0		0	0	1	0	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>
Alex Benbow (Bristol)	<b>7</b>	0	0	1		0	1	0	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>
Martin Evans (Exeter)	<b>10</b>	0	0	1	1		1	0	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
Neil Marshall (Plymouth)	<b>11</b>	0	0	0	0	0		0	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>
Thomas Williams (Bath)	<b>14</b>	0	1	1	1	1	1		<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>

Jack Fenwick was fully in his stride by Sunday morning and reporting: “Day 3 at BUSA Match Racing and quarter finals are about to get underway. First up is Southampton's Annabel Vose against Exeter's Martin Evans and Solent's Matt Reid against Southampton's Tom Harrison. Then we have Loughborough's Connor Miller against Surrey's Andrew Wishart and Durham's Guy Dixon against Thomas Williams from Bath. Wind is up around 20 knots so we don't expect to see spinnakers for a while at least”.

“First blood in QF1 goes to Martin Evans from Exeter leading from start to finish. In QF2 Solent's Matt Reid lead the whole way round but had to extend his lead far enough to take a penalty from a prestart battle.



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“An intense prestart saw Annabel Vose level Q1 at 1 all when Exeter, having received two penalties prestart, were too slow to take their second penalty after starting and were black flagged. In Q2 Tom Harrison controlled Matt Reid off the start line positioned close to windward. Reid managed to keep the pressure on and forced Southampton to tack away; they then led to the windward mark and sailed to a comfortable win and a 2-0 QF victory. The deciding match of QF 1 is now underway, stay tuned for all the latest news and results.

“Annabel Vose led the final race of Q1 from start to finish to secure her place in the semi-final. In Q3 while Connor Miller from Loughborough led from start to finish, there were never more than two boat lengths between them and Surrey's Andrew Wishart. Guy Dixon from Durham took victory in the first race of Q4. Details are scarce right now, but this umpire assumes it was a relaxed affair as one of the teams decided to stop for a quick swim.

“QF4 went down to the wire, Thomas Williams levelled the score in race two and was trailing in the decider. With just a boat length between them at the final mark it was neck and neck down the run. As the boats crossed the line almost side by side Adam Whittle had to be on his game to call a win for yellow and a 2-1 comeback win for Bath over Durham.

“In an uncharacteristic error, Connor Miller was penalised for entering early, a tight race followed, but Connor managed to squeeze enough of a lead to take his penalty on the second beat and just stay in control. With the boats overlapped down the run, Surrey were just not able to get in front and Loughborough took QF3 2-0.

“The sun has come out at Portland, and Jon (Napier) has taken his hat off. In other news, a tight start between Annabel and Matt in SF1 saw Annabel cross the start line a fraction early, leaving Matt to sail away to win the second race and secure his place in the final to keep alive Solent's chances of defending their BUCS/BUSA match racing title. In SF2 another tight battle between Loughborough and Bath saw both boats round the windward mark close together, but, with another match coming up the beat, they were briefly separated before coming back together in a luffing duel. After much flag waving, Bath were finally deemed to have not kept clear as windward boat, allowing Loughborough to gybe off and sail in to the lead and take their place in the final.

“SF1 went to Solent's Matt Reid beating Annabel Vose off the line and never losing his lead. In SF2 Bath and Loughborough hit the line side by side, with Thomas Williams edging forward all the time. With the port lay line rapidly approaching, Bath were unable to get across and Loughborough lead to the windward mark. The boats never got far apart and a last minute surge from Bath on the final gybe was not quite enough to get past Connor at the finish.

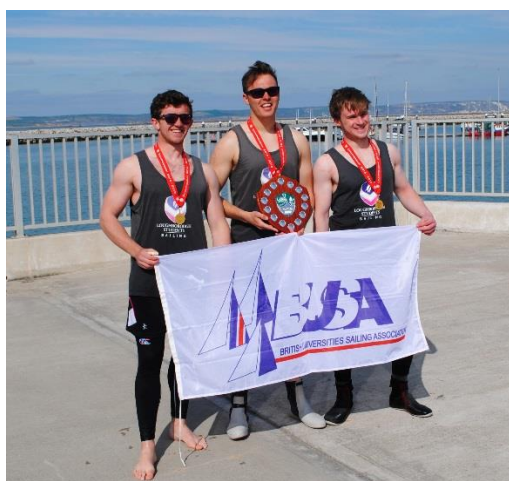


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“Another close finish, first race of the final sees Matt Reid slip across the line ahead of Connor Miller to take the win for Solent. In the petit final Bath took the win.

“Annabel takes race two of the petit final in magnificent style crossing the start line nearly 4 lengths ahead and cruising to victory. In another close race in the final, Connor narrowly held off the advancing charge of Matt on the final run. Both races now going to sudden death.

“Connor Miller, Mike Matthews and “Tommo” cross the finish to win BUCS/BUSA match racing.”



**The Champions – all round view**

Laurence Gibbons, Commodore of the University of Bath SC, has led his Club's entry to all four BUSA Championships this year, a first for several years. He enthused, “the Match Racing finished off a fantastic year for the club. To get 4th in such a competitive field is a great achievement, and with Tom and Jack able to compete for several more years to come, all looks very positive. I don't think we would have done nearly so well had it not been for the two weekends of winter match racing we took part in. The event itself was great and is surely going to be a priority in the future”.

Andrew Wishart of Surrey is also due to graduate after a great university sailing career: “This is the second time we've gone to the Match Racing champs. It's such a well set up event – with the boats, top quality umpires and evening debriefs, great sailing area and accommodation all in one place; it couldn't be better set up. The Elliott's are great fun to sail, and we enjoyed plenty of tight battles despite losing a few more than we'd like – always the way! But wanting to get better is also what keeps us coming back for more. Although I'm off to 'post-uni reality' now, I know our middle man has his eyes on the stick for next year - match racing is pretty addictive.

“It's great to be leaving the Sailing Club at Surrey in such rude health. When I arrived, we only went to the Fleets, but have added a discipline a year, with Team Racing first, then Match Racing and now have the full set with the Yachting Champs as well this year; hopefully that will be the status quo in the future! As the club has got bigger, we have had more and more racing sailors join, which has been great for me personally as I got to sail in better and better teams every year – and I was enjoying the Team Racing Qualifiers, even when we only won two races back in 2012/13!”

Guy Dixon of Durham spoke of the northern contingent of teams that had competed: “As ever, it was a professionally run event using the Olympic boats and accommodation with high standard racing. Despite losing out narrowly in the quarter finals, we were more than pleased with our eventual 5th placed finish; especially given it was our first event sailing together as a trio. It was fantastic to be joined by both Newcastle and York and, despite the long trek from up North, we will certainly be back next year”. Rebekka Thomas of York added: “We had a great time and learned a lot; the umpires and other teams were really helpful and gave us loads of advice. I think that, after a bit of training, York would love to have another go at match racing at some point in the future!”

Matt Reid of Southampton Solent said: “With little expectations, we took it race by race and were pleased to come away with a silver after some tight battles, especially against Annabel in the Round Robin/Semis and Connor in the Finals. I was fortunate to be joined by Chris Tiernan who has won the event two years' running with Phil Bendon and Bruno Van Dyke; the knowledge and experience Chris brought to the team was invaluable, making my life a lot easier on the water! The event was run smoothly, with good opportunities throughout to better understand the calls from the umpires' perspective. Really looking forward to the Royal Southern Match Cup in June; hopefully I can take forward the leaning points from this weekend. Hopefully too I can return next year to try and go one better!”



**Chris Tiernan, Matt Reid & John Hamilton  
Southampton Solent**



**Tom Ballantine, Calum Healey & Annabel Vose  
Southampton Red**

Champion helm, Connor Miller gave a full response: "BUSA Match Racing 2015 was a well-run event as always - perhaps could be even greater by adding a social aspect next year?!"

"The first couple of days saw tricky conditions, and we had some exciting races in our round robin where we were pushed all the way to the finish line. It's great to see some new faces on the circuit, and I think the Winter Match Race series is really helping to promote the discipline. The standard has definitely increased across the board and, as BUSA Captain for the coming Tour, it's an exciting prospect knowing that we have a lot of talent to take on the Yanks in the States come September.

"The Quarter finals against Surrey was probably some of the most stressful racing of the event, with no kites, meaning each finish was won by a boat length or less. Our Semi-Final against Bath also saw some very close finishes. The breeze had fully died off for the Finals, where we were pitted against Southampton Solent. We led the first race off the start line, but, with some close tacking duels, they managed to sneak inside us at the top mark and, despite attacking downwind, they managed to keep hold off the race. After a classic Rascal Racing bicker on board our boat after the first race, we sailed away in the second race and went into the decider feeling strong. Solent led off the start-line, but we attacked downwind and took the lead, eventually trucking through the finish line and sealing the Championship. I must commend Mike and Tommo for sailing flawlessly all event long as they were the ones making the difference. Sailing is a game of inches and, when you add up all the inches, it's what makes "the difference between winning and losing.

It's been a great year for Loughborough Sailing that has seen the Club's evolution into a top-tier team. We are all truly looking forward to the challenge of bettering this performance next year, this is 'Where History Begins'."



**Peter Johnson with the Champions, Michael Matthews, Connor Miller & Tom Neilson  
© Richard Kingsnorth**

BUSA President and CHUMP (Chief Umpire), Peter Johnson awarded BUCS Medals to the top three teams. The following BUCS Points (always much welcomed by University Sailing Clubs and Athletics Unions) go to:

Loughborough University	20
Southampton Solent University	14
University of Southampton	10
University of Bath	7
Durham University	5
University of Southampton	3
University of Exeter	2
University of Surrey	1

**The teams overall:**

- 1 Loughborough: Connor Miller, Michael Matthews, Tom Neilson
- 2 Southampton Solent: Matt Reid, Christopher Tiernan, John James Hamilton
- 3 Southampton Red: Annabel Vose, Tom Ballantine, Calum Healey
- 4 Bath: Thomas Williams, Laurence Gibbons, Jack Preece
- 5 Durham: Guy Dixon, Matthew Goodbourn, Chuan Yang Ko
- 6 Southampton Black: Tom Harrison, Jamie Diamond, JJ Marie
- 7 Exeter: Martin Evans, William Sellers, Scott Wallis
- 8 Surrey: Andrew Wishart, Joe Stansfield, Freddie Chiddicks
- 9= Swansea: Alex Benbow, Reuben Murphy, James Curtis
- 9= Newcastle: Ben Swyer, Harry Frith, James Morson
- 11= Bristol: Stevie Beckett, Edward Le Gassick, Sam Davies
- 11= Cardiff: Rory Davis, Jolyon Ferron, Harriet Culver
- 13= Plymouth: Neil Marshall, Connor Brain, Joseff Fox
- 13= York: Rebekka Thomas, Robert Mills, Saskia Botterell

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- Ends -

**Some images culled from BUSA Facebook:**



**Our man on the water, Jack Fenwick, chauffeured by Liz Procter  
- exhausting business reporting for BUSA!**



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