



British Universities and  
Colleges Sport

Fleet Championships  
2015



## Preview

5 November, 2015



Fireflies at the 2014 Fleet Championships © Sean Clarkson

## University sailors head for Cardiff with bigger fleets

British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS), together with British Universities Sailing Association (BUSA), holds its annual Fleet Racing Championship in Cardiff over the coming weekend, 6 – 8 November 2015. The event is being hosted by Cardiff University at the Cardiff Bay Yacht Club.

**This is the first national sailing event of the academic year. There has been a 35% increase in entries this year, both sailors and boats. There will be some 235 sailors competing in four fleets: Fast Handicap, Firefly, Laser and Slow Handicap, all of which have increased this year. These include new students having their first taste of university sailing at this event. But it also attracts some skilled, high performance sailors, often recently in youth squads or experienced on the international circuit and some even starting Olympic campaigns, alongside sailors who sail in a variety of classes and at club level or have developed their sailing through training afforded by university sailing clubs.**

The competition can be fierce, but there is a great spirit, and every effort is given to support as wide participation as possible. In addition to individual Fleet titles, there is also great competition between universities in the points-based league table, with overall University Ladies' and Men's Team titles, BUCS Medals and the all-important BUCS (financial) points to carry back in both the women's and men's categories.

In the Fast Handicap fleet, the leading helms and several of their crews are back from last year's Championship. The 2014 Fast Handicap Champion, Hugh Ward (Southampton), although returning, is

crewing an RS200 this year with Gareth Viney. But fellow 2014 podium medallists, Jamie Diamond & Fred Hayes (Southampton) and Jamie Barker & Emily Nagel (Southampton), both in RS200s, will be as keen as ever to take the title. At the same time, they will want to retain maximum points toward their university's tally in the Team championship. Other 2014 top-ten helms returning this year are Kim May-Papailiou (Surrey) (29er), Andrew Whapshott (Plymouth) (49er) and Harry Wilson and Andrew Strickland, both also from Plymouth, sailing their Musto Skiffs.



RS200s – among the popular classes in the Fast Handicap Fleet © Sean Clarkson

The ever-growing Firefly fleet sees the return of 2014 Champion helm, Matt Wallis (Cardiff) on home waters. But with 2014 top-ten returning helms including James Parker-Mowbray (Plymouth), Helena Pugh (Cardiff), Rico Kuehleind (Bristol) and Amy Yeoman, with Isabel Scruby, of Birmingham, he will be under pressure. Isabel Fitzgerald and Scott Wallis, both of Exeter (who were 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, in 420s, in the Slow Handicap fleet last year), and Tom Ballantine (Southampton), who sailed his National 12 to 5<sup>th</sup> in 2014, are all sailing the Firefly this year and should be challenging for supremacy too.



Freddie Chiddicks in a battle to the line at the top of the Laser Fleet © Sean Clarkson

Freddie Chiddicks (Surrey), who had to take fourth place in 2014 behind the three Olympic Development Squad sailors, will be looking to lead the Laser fleet, as will Radial sailors, Hannah Tilley

(Southampton) and Giles Kuzyk (Birmingham) (5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> respectively last year). But they will be contending with Newcastle's veteran, Andrew Brown, who returns to top his Bronze (2012) and Silver (2011).

We caught up with Andrew as he and his colleagues finished packing up the Newcastle boats. ....yes, boats! Andrew has company this year, after those years of single-handedly gathering BUCS points for his university; he now is part of a team. "It looks like it will be an interesting weekend with the weather. I have not been at the Fleets (or in the Laser) for a couple of years, but, although Plymouth made a great venue, I have to say Cardiff will be a more manageable journey – we crossed the Tyne Bridge around 4.00 am on return home last time. Anyway, this year, we are a *team* from Newcastle! I am looking forward to using the legs, hiking!"



Hannah Tilley , the leading Radial sailor, takes 5<sup>th</sup> in the Laser fleet © Sean Clarkson

The Slow Handicap fleet sees the return of more top-ten competitors from 2014 – helms George Meredith and David Paul, both of Oxford Brookes. They may get a shock when Cardiff unveils their 420 dream team. Recently graduated from Plymouth, and now doing a Masters at Cardiff, Craig Dobb is renewing his long-term and successful partnership in the 420 and 470 with Charlie Cox, sailing their old friend, the 420. Craig will want to take the Slow Handicap Gold, after his Silver in 2013 and Gold in the Firefly fleet in 2012.



A Handicap start © Kristian Brunt-Seymour

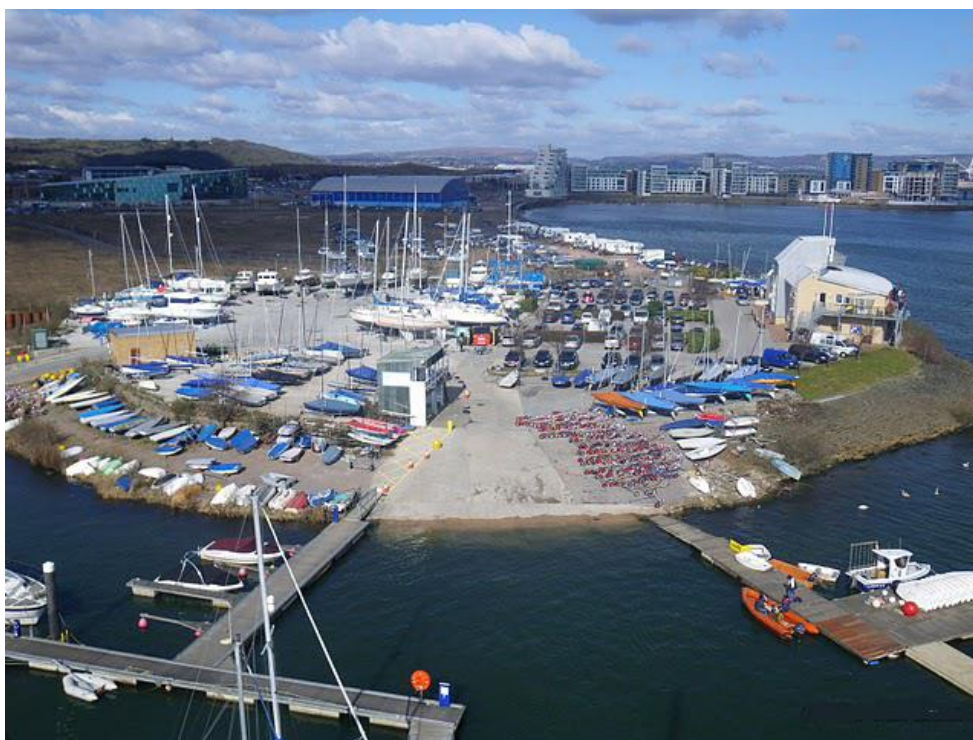
But a year is a long time in sailing and in a university career, so anything may happen in the four fleets this year, with many newcomers to the Championship and many aiming to better their standings and to achieve all-important BUCS points for their universities.

Exeter's Vice Commodore and Team Captain, Sophie Ward spoke about the University's approach to the Championship. "The team are really looking forward to the event. We are under some pressure - partly that we have big boots to fill from last year and also because our Athletics Union would like us to do well. Having recently taken delivery of some new boats and with, for us, the cost implications of the change of venues, we have had to focus carefully on team selection to maximise what we can. We have been training – sadly today in very light winds, when the forecast suggests a more a more lively this weekend. But having put a lot of time and effort into selecting the team, there are definitely some Exeter sailors worth watching! We are really looking forward to it".

Amy Yeoman of Birmingham was enthusiastic: "we are looking forward to Cardiff a lot, a change of scenery. We are feeling good after our teams' recent successes in the team racing at the Leeds Halloween Howler. We have had a lot of new freshers this year. It will be good to be sailing with Izzy Scruby in fleet racing and on the sea once again. We want to bring home points and medals. We have been loading the carbs in anticipation of the forecast weather and, being Birmingham, we will enjoy the socials too!"

There seems to be an air of ...well, excitement around. We are delighted that the University of East Anglia are back with us this year, and their Team Captain, Jeremy Freeman set the tone: "We are all getting very excited for sailing this weekend!!

The appointment of Cardiff University to host 2015 Championship followed a competitive process, with bids from three UK universities. Cardiff's proposal was submitted by Cardiff University Sailing Club, Cardiff University Students Union (CUSU) and Athletic Union, in partnership with Cardiff University and Cardiff Bay Yacht Club, supported by RYA Cymru Wales. Also collaborating with the other yacht clubs in Cardiff Bay, Cardiff City Council and other training centres, including Cardiff Bay Water Activity Centre, the University Sailing Club has the support and cooperation of the Cardiff Harbour Authority,



Cardiff Bay Yacht Club © Ollie Green

Cardiff University Sailing Club's President, Harry Derbyshire said: 'Everyone here at Cardiff University are really excited to welcome all the sailors coming to the BUCS/BUSA Fleet Racing Nationals this weekend! The event looks to be set for great sailing and socials, and we are amazed by the 35% increase in competitors and boats from previous years. This should set up a highly competitive and well fought event for all classes. On behalf of Cardiff Uni Sailing club, we'd like to thank CBYC, RYA

Cymru, BUSA, BUCS and our Athletics Union for their support. We hope we can live up to the high expectations set in previous years. Good luck to all competing!

Poppy Barker, this year's Cardiff Commodore, added her own emphasis, "we are so excited to be hosting this event; we are delighted to welcome all of the competitors to Cardiff where they can expect an exciting weekend of racing and socials."

Mike Jacot, Commodore of Plymouth University Sailing and Power Club says: 'After hosting the fleet nationals for the past four years, a new sailing venue with some spicy weather conditions are sure to shake things up and provide some fantastic racing and also some great spectator moments! We're looking forward to defending our top university team title with some stiff competition coming from a number of strong universities this year! We'd also like to say a massive thank you to all the volunteers that make this event happen, as we couldn't do this without them! Looking forward to seeing everybody on the water for what looks like will be some awesome racing!'

Sean Clarkson, BUSA Vice President and Event Director: "It has been great to see such a positive response to the decision to hold this year's fleet racing championships in Cardiff. We have seen not only an increased number of entrants across all classes, but also a wider range of boats in the two handicap classes. My thanks goes to Cardiff University for their work thus far in making the event possible. I hope everyone has a good weekend and enjoys sailing in the waters of Cardiff bay."

Event information is available at <http://www.busa.co.uk/events/3801-2/> and news will be posted during the event on <https://www.facebook.com/events/777215679055431/>. Links also available via <https://www.facebook.com/groups/busasailing/>.