



CEILIDH CUP 2016 & SSS Match Racing Championship



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Day 1 at the 2016 Ceilidh Cup © Neill Ross www.neillrossphoto.co.uk

Mark Greenhalgh wins Ceilidh Cup, with Edinburgh, St Andrews and Strathclyde, joint Scottish student champions

Light winds over the weekend of 8 & 9th October made for tricky conditions on Helensburgh's East Patch racing area during the Royal Northern & Clyde Yacht Club's Ceilidh Cup and the Scottish University Sailing (SSS) Match Racing Championship 2016. This is Scotland's only match racing event, where competitors face each other in a round robin of one-on-one races in the Club's identical Sonar yachts. It forms part of the RYA National Match Racing Series, the winner automatically qualifying for the finals to be held in Weymouth on 18 – 20 November.



University of Highlands and Islands (Joe Penhaul Smith)
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Edinburgh (Alan Ekström) and Glasgow (Peter Cameron)
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The event is held in association with Scottish Student Sailing (SSS) and, therefore, welcomes eligible University teams to compete for the SSS prize. Indeed, the Ceilidh Cup is the first competitive competition in the SSS calendar and offers teams an early opportunity to trial helms and crews for match racing and keel boating competition later in the academic year.



Glasgow University (Louis Sisk, with Jacob Sim, Andrei Ligena, Griogair Macfarlane)
University of Edinburgh (Alex Ekström, with Archie Chitty, Suzy Peters, Ross Slater)
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Nine teams were competing, including seven representing Scottish universities. This year, entry for the Ceilidh Cup had been over-subscribed, so competition was hot for the nine selected teams. Notably among them, defending champion Nicole McPherson relinquished her helming role on the RNCYC team in favour of Mark Greenhalgh. St Mary's Loch SC was helmed by former Edinburgh and Strathclyde sailor, Ali Morrish



RNCYC (Mark Greenhalgh) and Aberdeen (Ailsa Muskett)
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Among the university competitors, Joe Penhaul Smith was helming for the University of Highland & Islands, its first competitive entry in an SSS event. Strathclyde University had two entries, helmed by Peter Cameron and Ewan Rycroft. Alex Ekström, formerly of St Andrews, helmed for Edinburgh University. St Andrews introduced experienced Hungarian Nacra 17 sailor Balázs Gecse to match racing this weekend. The remaining teams represented Aberdeen University (Ailsa Muskett) and Glasgow University (Louis Sisk).



St Andrews University (Balázs Gecse)
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Five out of twelve flights were completed when the wind died at 2pm on Saturday. The resolve of PRO David Denholm was tested in keeping the nine competing teams on the water until 4pm, when the wind returned and racing continued for a further two flights.

Sunday dawned sunny, but with a forecast lighter in the wind department than Saturday's. Yet with sufficient wind, racing got underway, with a further two flights completed before the wind died, just in time for lunch.



University of Edinburgh (helmed by Alex Ekström, crew Archie Chitty, Suzy Peters, Ross Slater) © Neill Ross www.neillrossphoto.co.uk

After a two-hour delay, and with the result for the Ceilidh Cup clear, the race committee elected to reschedule racing to focus upon the SSS Match Racing Championship. By moving inshore, the PRO found a 5 knot thermal band that permitted racing to continue for a further three races before the time limit expired.



Strathclyde University Blue (Peter Cameron)
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The overall Ceilidh Cup prize was awarded to RNCYC's own entry, helmed by Mark Greenhalgh, with crew David (Daka) Fadipe, Nicole McPherson & Alan Yendell, having 7 wins from 7 races sailed.



RNCYC helmed by Mark Greenhalgh, with crew David (Daka) Fadipe, Nicole McPherson & Alan Yendell © Neill Ross www.neillrossphoto.co.uk

In the SSS competition, identified from matches against university teams, there was a three-way tie for first place: Strathclyde University Blue (helmed by Peter Cameron, crew Eilidh Bruce Angus Gray-Stephens & Rhuaridh Wright); University of Edinburgh (helmed by Alex Ekström, crew Archie Chitty, Suzy Peters, Ross Slater) and St Andrews University (helmed by Balázs Gecse, crew Alex Carter, Henry Cross & Ellery Sever).



University of Edinburgh (Alex Ekström, Archie Chitty, Suzy Peters, Ross Slater); Strathclyde University Blue (Peter Cameron, Eilidh Bruce Angus Gray-Stephens & Rhuaridh Wright); St Andrews University (Balázs Gecse, Alex Carter, Henry Cross & Ellery Sever) © Neill Ross www.neillrossphoto.co.uk

Particular appreciation was expressed for the work of PRO David Denholm and the Race Committee and to international chief umpire, John Doerr, fresh from the Paralympics in Rio, and his team.

Craig Macdonald
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With thanks to Craig Macdonald, for his continuing support to the Ceilidh Cup and to student sailing, and to Neill Ross, for, once again, making a photographic record.