



British Universities' Sailing Association

Press Release

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RYA & BUSA Ladies' Team Racing Nationals 2017



Team Racing at the Ladies' Nationals 2017 © Nigel Vick

Oxford win BUSA and Royal & Northern and Clyde take the RYA title

Over the weekend of 25th and 26th February, the RYA & BUSA Ladies' Team Racing Nationals 2017 took place at Spinnaker Sailing Club, hosted jointly by Spinnaker and by Wessex (Southampton University) Sailing Club. The event is open to women's teams, whether current university students or not. They all compete for the RYA Trophy; while university teams, each from a particular university, also compete for the BUSA Trophy.

The Royal Northern & Clyde Yacht Club (RNCYC & Friends) won the RYA Ladies' Team Racing Nationals, after a hard-fought competition culminating in Oxford University winning the BUSA title. Strong winds prevailed over the entire weekend with racing being run in storm sails throughout.

Fourteen teams entered, nine representing universities (Bristol, Cambridge, Kent, Oxford (x2), Portsmouth, Southampton (x2), Swansea). The others included a brace of teams; SSS & Glasgow Golden Delicious, made up of Scottish University sailors, the latter having an Imperial student joining them. The Royal Northern & Clyde Yacht Club's "RNCYC and Friends", Old Jos (the 2014 winners from Birmingham Uni, now an alumni team) and Sevenoaks School, the only Youth (Under 18) team in the regatta, made up a strong field.

Racing began at 10.15 on Saturday; there was an average wind speed of 16 knots, with gusts of up to 30.

There were a few capsizes, but 80 races of Stage 1 round robin were run, meaning teams completed either 11 or 12 races. Once all the scores had been collected and the ties broken, Cambridge University emerged as the overnight leaders. They were tied with the RNCYC, with one loss each, but, as Cambridge won with a solid 234 when they met, they came out as top team.



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The RNCYC seemed a little rusty at first, but soon found their groove, unsurprising as the last time most of the team had been Firefly team racing was in the 2011 BUSA Finals! They were closely followed by Southampton Purple, who also lost to Cambridge after Mary Henderson (Wessex SC organiser) capsized and had to retire. Sevenoaks School were 5th overall going into the overnight break, with 6 wins from 11 races and causing upsets with many uni teams.



© Nigel Vick

Teams headed back to Southampton to enjoy the legendary Wessex SC hospitality, with a meal in Portswood Town followed by Jesters nightclub - A classic Southampton University team racing social. The fancy dress theme of Fairies seemed well supported, judging by the number of sailors in strange outfits or still in face paint the following morning.

Racing was underway at 09.30 on Sunday morning, with the 11 races required to complete Stage 1 finished by 1100. Stage 2 of the competition saw the teams split into two seeded leagues. The top seven teams (Cambridge, RNCYC, Southampton Purple, Bristol, Oxford Blue, Sevenoaks & Southampton Pink) were placed in the Gold League, with the next seven (Swansea, Old Jo's, Scottish Student Sailing, Portsmouth, Oxford White, Kent & Glasgow) in the Silver League.



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It was all still to play for as there was an opportunity for the top placed team in the Silver league to make it into Stage 3 (the Knockouts) via a repêchage. Racing in Stage 2 saw a variety of conditions from winds at Force 3 to Force 6. In the end, the Old Jos won the Silver League, coming out on top of a three-way tie with Swansea and SSS. In the Gold League, Oxford Blue had found their mode and powered away to 6 wins from 6. Cambridge Blue were second, dropping a race only to Oxford; they were trailed by RNCYC in third. The battle for 4th in Gold and, hence, a place in the Repêchage, saw a three way tie between both Southampton teams and Bristol. In the end, Bristol took 4th. Lower down in the Gold League Sevenoaks School finished in 7th place, with one win, to take the Youth Title, an impressive performance from a team much younger than all the others. There are definitely stars of the future in this team.



© Nigel Vick

By the time Stage 3 got underway the wind had built to the strongest it had been all day, and any ideas about switching to full sails for the knockouts had been abandoned. With time looking tight, a single race was held for the Repêchage. Old Jo's had the best start, but Bristol had better boat speed and handling, and, by the bottom of the run, they had converted to a stable 1,4,5 that they held to the finish. Oxford Blue, as winners of the Gold League were able to choose their semi-final opponent, and decided to sail Bristol in Semi-Final 1. This meant that Semi Final 2 was Cambridge versus RNCYC.



© Nigel Vick

The decision by the organisers to provide a regatta tea meant that many sailors stayed on to watch the semis and finals, which got underway in winds touching 25 knots. Both Semis were decided in two races and there were 4 capsizes in total.

Semi Final 1 saw Oxford take race one with a comfortable 1 2 4. The teams were evenly matched until a large gust wiped out 2 Bristol boats on the run. The capsizes had taken their toll on Bristol who had a poor start in Race Two, which gave Oxford a 1 2 at the first mark. Despite Oxford losing a boat after a capsize on the first beat, they held their 1, 2 until the last beat, where a dogged but, ultimately too late, fight back from Bristol saw Oxford finish with a 1, 3 to book a place in the Final. In Semi Final 2, RNCYC seemed to be handling the strong winds better than Cambridge. Race One was a simple affair and RNCYC powered away to 1, 2 not needing their third boat which had capsized on the start line. Cambridge regrouped and came out fighting in Race Two. They had an excellent start at the pin end; at the top mark and across the first reach, it was hard to say which team was in the lead. By the end of the run, Cambridge looked in control, but some tricky shifts and poor management of the final beat allowed RNCYC to get back into the race and cross the line with a 1, 4, 5. With two race wins under their belt, RNCYC booked a place in the Final.

The strong winds in the Semi Finals had clearly left Bristol exhausted and, despite being offered the chance to race Cambridge in a petit final, they declined. This gave Cambridge third overall, which seemed a fair conclusion given that they had clearly out-sailed Bristol in Stage 2. This meant that only the Final between Oxford Blue and RNCYC was left to run. By reaching the final Oxford had already won the BUSA title, and now it was a fight for the RYA title.

With the wind increasing throughout stage 3, the finals were run in the strongest winds seen at the event, with the anemometer clocking a gust of 33 knots. Oxford started confidently in Race One and, when RNCYC had a boat retire after a capsize, it was an easy win for Oxford with a 1, 4, 5. In Race Two huge gusts ripped through the course, which resulted in a capsize for each

team. With the race now 2 versus 2, RNCYC acted swiftly to lock out both remaining Oxford boats and finish the race with a 1,3 to cue up a final deciding race.



Oxford Blue celebrate winning the BUSA Nationals (supporting Ladies' Captain, Melisande Besse © Ed Morris

During the carnage of Race Two, Oxford captain Melisande Besse managed to dislocate her knee cap. After popping it back in, Melisande decided to continue for Race Three. Unsurprisingly, the incident appeared to unsettle the Oxford team, and RNCYC led from the start to calmly sail over the line in 1, 2, 3 and take the title. A fantastic effort by both teams to keep sailing in very windy conditions, but, especially, by Oxford!



RNCYC & Friends win the 2017 RYA Team Racing Nationals © Anthony Butler

At the prize giving, Nicole McPherson, RNCYC Captain, praised the competitors & organisers for a fantastic event. She also encouraged teams to venture north of the border to enjoy the large of amount of team racing that is happening in Scotland.



Team sevenoaks (Sevenoaks School) © Anthony Butler

Holly MacAskill, Captain of Sevenoaks, said “It was really good for us. We came thinking we would really not do well, because of the wind conditions, we are quite a young team and also quite small. With the wind blowing down the lake, it was lucky we were with cut-downs. We did not expect even to get to the Gold fleet, so that was really good for us. Everyone has been great; good to sail with all these good university, really up there, especially some of the top teams, such as Cambridge. Because, even though you are fighting, but losing, you are seeing what they are doing and can use this in the other races. But it was rough out there, and a lot of time when we were trying to keep the boat flat; they would just come and sail past – so annoying! Really good learning; good learning curve, with things we can do at other events, against other schools. I’m now in my last year, and I hope to be going up to university and to team race there, travelling to lots of events and sailing with BUSA in the future”.

Some ‘RNYC and Friends’, winners of the RYA Nationals, bubbled: “Beautifully organized; great racing, lots and lots of races in; great quality teams; thanks very much to all the organisers; best event I have been to all year”.

Melisande Besse, OUYC Ladies’ Captain and Oxford Blue gave a quick rundown on how they had experienced the event. “Really great teams. We had some great competition in Stage 1 of the event; we did not win all the races. Pleased to see Sevenoaks here. In Stage 2, we had one team in Silver and one in Gold. We had lost against Cambridge twice, so really good (to beat them here); really good races. For the Semis and Finals, I thought the Race Committee was really brave to proceed with sailing in the conditions; it was really tough, but we had really great races, in the end against RNCYC, I dislocated my knee in the second race. We were 1, 5, 6 all around the course and trying to slow, when it popped out on the final beat, which was

disappointing. But RNCYC were a really great team, and I do not feel bad having lost to them; it was a well-deserved win”.



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Rachel Tilley, Cambridge’s Ladies’ Captain said: “Fantastic event. Very impressive number of races for the conditions. Enjoyable to be racing just ladies. Very high quality of racing. Disappointing to lose out to Oxford. We’ll get our revenge at Varsity!”

Event Director, Ed Morris, added: "It was wonderful to have fourteen teams, from as far across the UK as you could get, compete at Spinnaker in challenging conditions. Finally, thanks must go to Thomas Walworth (RO, without him I would be completely lost!), Chris Atkins (ChUmp) and his team of Penny Carter, Tom Clay, Greg Eaton, Chris Lindsay, Nick Rusbridge, Nick Ross & Nigel Vick. The army of amazing volunteers from Wessex SC were led by Mary Henderson, who also arranged the social and still competed with Southampton Purple. Thanks also to Hywel Morris, Ian Campbell from Spinnaker Club and Eric Billington of Winchester College. It was a great weekend - it would have been perfect if the Saints had not been robbed in the EFL Cup Final!".

Results (summary):

Place	Team	Remarks
1	RNCYC (D)	
2	Oxford Blue (K)	BUSA Champions
3	Cambridge Blue (I)	BUSA Runner Up
4	Bristol (J)	BUSA Bronze
5	Southampton Purple (A)	4th BUSA
6	Southampton Pink (F)	5th BUSA
7	Sevenoaks School (B)	Youth Champion
8	Old Jos (U)	
9	Swansea (E)	6th BUSA
10	SSS (C)	
11	Oxford White (L)	7th BUSA
12	University of Kent (H)	8th BUSA
13	Glasgow Golden (N)	
14	University of Portsmouth (G)	9th BUSA

Letters indicate bib identifiers

For full results, see <http://www.busa.co.uk/events/ryabusa-ladies-team-racing-championships/>

Teams:

*Bristol: Alice Kidd, Clem Mockett, Tilly James, Issy Gordon, Milly Pugh & Mica Narraway (Bib J)

*Cambridge Blue: Rachel Tilley, Chloe Macaulay, Anna Prescott, Catriona Wallace, Jemima Lawson & Helmi Burton-Papp (I)

Glasgow Golden Delicious: Lindsay McCosh, Ruth Brown, Heather Sword, Inn Handke, Caroline Boule (Imperial) & Megan Morrison (N)

*Kent: Harriet Ayre, Olivia Barrett, Alice de Vitry, Izzy Howard, Abiee Harris & Sophie Parker (H)

Old Jos: Amy Yeoman, Pip Jeffris, Elizabeth Hubbard, Abigail Griffiths, Lucy Childs & Isabel Scruby (U)

*Oxford Blue: Ali Bibby, Meli Besse, Jenny Cropley, Anne-Laure Villa, Lucy Mellers & Rowena Conway (K)

*Oxford White: Penny Weiser, Kitty Hatchley, Gabby Lynch, Lauren Davis, Kathryn Cole & Clare Kendall-Bohosalwec (J)

*Portsmouth Purple: Scarlett Anderson, Fiona Mulcahy, Lucy Terkelsen, Laura Phillips, Georgia Grice & Claire Joseph (G)

RNCYC & Friends: Nicole McPherson, Mags Normand, Ali Mo, Robyn Fitzgerald, Caroline Beveridge & Anna Dobson (D)

**Sevenoaks: Helen Jones, Isobel Lewis, Alice Parker, Holly MacAskill, Anne-Marie Ratnage & Cossie Lewis B)

*Southampton Pink: Emma Horn, Lauren Miles, Sophie Heritage, Ellie Wollmann, Joe Kalderon & Lucy Lowe (F)

*Southampton Purple: Mary Henderson, Sarah Eames, Chloe Martin, Kate Devereaux, Morgan Dibb & Charlie Darling (A)

SSS Ladies : Caitlin Ross, Emma Cameron, Ailsa Muskett, Sarah Ramsey, Sophie Taylor & Rebekka Thomas (C)

*Swansea Blue: Rhiannon Massey, Annamaria Nichols, Emma Young, Jemma Dixon, Caitlin Jones & Freya Darnton (E)

Denotes: * eligible for BUSA Trophy; ** Youth team



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