



British Universities' Sailing Association

Press Release

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RYA & BUSA Ladies' Team Racing Nationals 2015



Claire Lasko – Society captain and three times Ladies Nationals champion in action at the 2013 edition © Nigel Vick

Student women's teams converge on Spinnaker: Birmingham University to defend both titles!

On the weekend of 14-15 March, the RYA & BUSA Ladies' Team Racing Nationals will take place at the Spinnaker Sailing Club, together with a social programme hosted by Wessex (Southampton University) Sailing Club.

This event is key part of both the RYA and BUSA team racing calendars. Sailors who competed at Spinnaker in 2013 and at West Kirby in 2014 will be returning, with enthusiasm and some excitement, for the event, while new faces and teams will join in the competition and the fun. The number of teams entering has progressively grown, with twenty teams entering this year, including fifteen university teams for the BUSA Championship.

Held in the past at Spinnaker Sailing Club, to which it returns this year, the event was at West Kirby Sailing Club last year, creating a touring fixture and attracting interest and some new teams. This seems to have had a positive effect, and this year's entry is better than ever. Amongst the university teams are two each from Plymouth and Glasgow, the latter doubling its entry (and the distance) in 2015 on the back of the success of its venture southwards last year.



A start at the 2014 West Kirby Ladies' Nationals © Phil Shepherd

The full line-up includes university teams from the Universities of Bath, Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Cardiff, Durham, Glasgow, Loughborough, Nottingham, Oxford, Plymouth, Southampton and London, together with the Scorpion Class Association, Society, Society and the Ducklings, Spinnaker and West Kirby Highlanders, converging at Blashford Lake this weekend to compete for the titles. The 120 competitors will sail close to two hundred short and intense, 3-boat versus 3-boat, head to head races over the weekend.

Amongst the teams hoping to clinch the RYA title is Society. The team of Oxbridge Alumni is led by three-time champion Claire Lasko. Claire said "The Ladies Nationals is really special event; probably my favourite team racing event of the year..... I really hope we can take the title". Standing in the way of Society will be, among others, the locals; Spinnaker Club. The team is captained by Marianthe Evangelidis (last year's BUSA Ladies' Captain), who has won the RYA Open Team Racing Championships with the formidable Spinnaker Auspicious multiple times. Marianthe is keen to deliver silverware to the host club: "We are hoping that our local knowledge will give us the edge this weekend, the team is really up for it and wants to do the club proud – we've never managed to win the open championship on home waters, so it would be great to win the Ladies' at Spinnaker!"



Action at the 2015 University of Nottingham Snakebite © Andreas Billman

The 2014 Nationals were won by Birmingham University. Captain Amy Yeoman said “we are excited. We know that the competition will be strong, but we are determined....and the socials are looking good!” Southampton University (Wessex Sailing Club). Ladies’ Captain, Hannah Tilley, said, “we really want to do as well as we can. The whole club is behind the event, both in terms of fielding the best possible team and helping to run the event with Spinnaker”.



2014 RYA & BUSA Champions – University of Birmingham © Phil Shepherd

Along with helping to organise the on-the-water activities, Wessex Sailing Club, will also be hosting and entertaining most of the competitors on the Saturday night, with a Black Tie Ball at the Royal Southampton Yacht Club. Emily Nagel, BUSA Ladies’ Captain and Commodore of Wessex Sailing Club is excited: “I can’t wait – we have an action packed weekend ahead of us. The sailing programme will be excellent, and we have managed to fill the Royal Southampton to capacity!”



Action at the 2014 edition at West Kirby © Phil Shepherd

For many women sailing at university this event is a key step in their sailing careers and is being increasingly seen as a must-do opportunity to build skills and share the experience of top level competition. Speaking of their decision to return this year with two teams, after their experience at the 2014 Championships, Lindsay Kerr of Glasgow spoke of the “open” nature of the event. “Whilst competitive, but not super competitive, perhaps the Ladies’ is more friendly and relaxed than the

BUSA Playoffs and Finals that we have experienced in England. For us Scots, the social side is a key element, and the 2014, with its friendly, female atmosphere, singing (on the water – not just at the clubhouse karaoke) was a great vibe. We had a fantastic time. So having organised our entry late last year, we have worked at this year's from the outset. The Glasgow Sports Union, seeing the impact last year, has provided good funding. So, bringing several new sailors in the teams; we are excited".



Action at the University of Nottingham Snakebite 2015 © David Eberlin

Several universities have been keen to join the event this year. Millie Gibbons of Loughborough explained: "This is the first time there has been a Ladies' Captain here, at least for many years. We had a great intake of freshers into the women's section this year. We were determined to enter the Ladies', but none of the six of us were helms, so we just had to have three volunteers. I have had a great time at the Nottingham Snakebite and at the Irish Nationals at Schull, where we met up with the Glasgow women. We are really looking forward to the racing and the socials at the Ladies' Championships".



Close Racing at the University of Nottingham Snakebite 2015 © Andreas Billman

Plymouth is coming to the event for a second time with two teams. Commodore Emily Mulligan reflected on three years' experience with her sailing club and the Ladies' Championship: "I am proud

of the growing number of women on the water at Plymouth over the three years. In my first year, there was limited experience, but last year the intake of women from 420s who could do it and the time we put into training helped, but Evie really got it going". "This is a great event, my third year, it is so good", enthused Team Captain, Evie Clemance.



2015 Ladies' Nationals at West Kirby © Phil Shepherd

It is important because it says, "we can do this in our own right. And it is also a girls' great night out, over a weekend, always amazing, not too serious, competitive, but very friendly", Echoing these thoughts, Megan Adams, a former Laser sailor, spoke of her entry into university sailing, having missed the sailing club 'trials' due to a course commitment. In her second year, the assumption had been that a girl would be a crew, but she made the second (mixed) team as the only female helm. But "the Ladies' was great, the funnest event, had a great time". Her advice as a woman coming into university sailing, "don't be scared, go for it, be confident and push yourself".



Fast and furious at the 2013 Nationals at Spinnaker © Nigel Vick

The busy schedule for the Ladies Nationals 2015 has meant that the Race Committee has reissued the Notice of Race and brought forward the briefing to 09.30 on Saturday 14th March. It is hoped that racing will start as soon as possible after the briefing.

Emily Nagel, BUSA Ladies' Captain, said, "we at Wessex and Spinnaker SCs are really excited to have the RYA and BUSA Ladies' Nationals return down south. We have a busy weekend scheduled and are hoping are hoping for a bigger and better event than ever before. With 20 teams coming down from as far away as Glasgow, the competition will be higher than ever. But that does not mean we will be slacking on the social front. We are stepping it up this year and taking all the girls to the Royal Southampton for a night of heels, dinner and dancing!!

Sailing will be run close to the shore in colour-matched fireflies and should be a good spectacle for all. The organisers are looking forward to welcoming visitors to Spinnaker Club, but, for those unable to watch the action from the shore, the event will be easy to follow online:

- Live Results, schedules and a blog will be available through the event website www.spinnakerclub.co.uk/2015ladiesnationals, together with all the race documentation.
- The event will also be widely covered on social media with a live and interactive Twitter run by Wessex Sailing Club: @WessexSC and Spinnaker: TeamRacing @SpinnyTR. To join the conversation, please use #Ladiestr15.

Of course, we will try to link up with it all via BUSA Sailing Facebook.



Making a splash at the University of Nottingham Snakebite 2015 © Andreas Billman



2013 Nationals at Spinnaker © Nigel Vick



Happy moment at the Hallam Hangover at Pennine SC in 2013 © Tony Mapplebeck



University of Nottingham Snakebite 2015 © Andreas Billman