

Danske Bank Icebreaker Race Report – 24th March 2019

Written by Garth Maxwell

After the weather had blown out the last 2 weeks' races, we eventually got back on the water yesterday. Not that the wind had eased that much really..... but with the toppers class cancelled and the multihulls nowhere to be seen, Elaine reckoned those who were there, were old enough and certainly ugly enough to take to the water. If she thought we looked a mess before we hit the water she got a shock when she saw us after we got back on dry land after the race.!!!

It was blowing quite hard with some strong gusts coming through which gave all competitors plenty to think about.

There was only one double handed boat on the water. Chunky and Michael Gunning decided this was the perfect weather to get back in the saddle after a bit of a lay off from dinghy sailing. They took the RS400 out for a bit of entertainment. I am not sure what happened to our sailing secretary, who sent the WhatsApp round telling everyone racing was on..... but his RS200 didn't make the water!!! (Maybe he had more sense!!)

Chunky was joined by the two fearless girls, Christina and Sandra in the large dinghy fleet- both in their Aero's.

As the three boats headed out to the North east mark the gusts were blowing hard and Elaine wisely asked all the rescue boats to gather at the NE mark as it was the gybe mark. Clever girl!!!

The boys didn't manage a gybe first time round but used the sensible approach of a tack at that mark. Not sure what happened to the girls at that particular mark. However Chunky and Michael were the only finishers in that class. Christina's boat was seen capsized, drifting at speed to the beach at the banks old people home..... without her!!! Sandra also came ashore early but fair play to both ladies for attempting to race.

The lasers were next away. In the 4.7's Ollie and Lucas continued their battle for first place. This time Ollie again, got the better of Lucas and is now only 1 point behind him in the series. The last three races will be exciting for these guys.

The radial class had 6 starters which was fantastic in these conditions..... Oh and they also had an imposter as Colm decided, discretion over valour, and put his radial sail on!!!

In very tricky conditions Jacques Picton sailed another great race to take the honours from Russel. A couple of capsizes put paid to Russel's attempts to overtake Jacques . Jess Winton did really well to finish 3rd. Joni , Emma P and Colleen didn't manage to complete the course but well done to all for getting onto the water.

In the standards it was a day for the young (ish) and fit or the tall and heavy. Rusty McGovern again got a flyer at the start and made the first mark out in front. I was in the top three or four and ran out of talent at the gybe mark and took out poor Charlie Taylor. We both had a lengthy swim and hard effort to get the boats back up as the whole fleet sailed past us. Mind you there were a few other casualties at this mark. I just could not see who they were as I was under water!!

Rusty continued to lead the whole way round but was being chased by Conor Simms and Colin Leonard, with John Simms and Conrad Simpson not far behind. However one of the best sails of the day was from big Charlie who battled his way back into 5 place having had to play catch up the whole way round. Good effort!!

Conor only lost his second place on the final beat but he let Colin and his Dad John nip in front of him pushing him into 4th. Adam Fermor is getting better in the strong winds and had a very solid 7th Place behind Charlie and Conrad. Chris was back in 8th place but again big respect to Chris for racing in that breeze.

Charlie Westhurst had one of his best races and was in the top 5 or 6 boats for most of the race, only falling back a bit at the end of the first lap. Unfortunately gear failure (yeah right!!!!) meant he had to come ashore early for a pint!!!.

So no silver or Bronze fleet managed to finish which was unfortunate.

Big shout out to the rescue teams who were fully occupied for the whole day keeping sailors safe, and recovering drifting boats. These were mostly young guys who were cold and soaked by the end of racing. Big thanks from all of us for your support.

Hopefully the weather will give us a break and let the whole fleet get back out next week. Hard to believe it's coming to the end of another series. It is still fairly open in all classes for podium finishes, but for sure DNC's will not help anyone's campaign so make sure you take advantage of the great racing in the next few weeks.