

It is hard to believe there is only one race left in this year's Danske Bank Icebreaker Series, but there is! Most classes have still got places up for grabs however the podium places are starting to become clear.

Last Sunday, Colin Loughhead took charge of the race and got all fleets away in good order. He was nearly sabotaged by Colin Leonard who gave him some feedback on his original course selection. Colin duly took the feedback and of course the wind changed back again which made that decision look dodgy. In fact the wind was shifting back and forward all day so it was never going to be an easy call. In any event we had as good racing as we could have expected with the wind in that direction and shifting as it was. Well done to Colin and his team.

Other action happened before the racing sequence got underway. Robin Gray, one of our Race Officers, had decided to participate in the racing itself rather than the management of it. He ventured out in an Aero to try his hand at that. He was prepared early and got himself out to the starting area in good time to ensure he had his racing prep done!! However all did not appear to be going well for poor Robin as his mainsail started to collapse from the mast. He was heard yelling to the rescue rib to come and save him. Schadenfreude jumps to mind as the chuckles of laughter developed throughout the other competitors. It was all in good nature and we all knew he was in no danger! I am not sure if he managed to make it back to the start line after being towed in for repairs.

All other classes got away in good order and we even had two multihulls join in again this week. Pete and Adrian took to the water with Pete edging out Adrian this week. Mat is still in the lead overall with Pete one point behind.

The large dinghy fleet were next away with six boats making the start line (excluding Robin). Good to see they all arrived at the start line in good time and set off up the first beat. Well done David :) In fact it meant David and Ryan took first place this week with Ian & Ruth just behind and Brian Bibby in 3rd. Overall David and Ryan lead by 3 points from Ian, and Brian Bibby has moved into 3rd on count back. Brian and Sandra are tied on points so next week will be critical.

In the 4.7s, Lucas Wass the only one out and so he opens up a 3 point lead over Ollie. That looks like a winning score - but let's see what happens next week.

In the radial fleet we had the unusual circumstances where none of the leading 10 boats were out - except for Russel Finlay. I am sure there is an explanation??? To be fair to Russel he retired rather than race to keep the series alive for the final week. It is only fair that all radials get on the water next week after Russel's act of selflessness !! It means that Jacques leads by 1 point with Joni, and Russel on 15 and Emma Pierce five back on 20. So it will be tight racing next week to get our podium.

In the standard fleet it was definitely a day for the light weight specialists! Well to be exact, the lightweights and Bill O'Hara, who made his first appearance of 2019. It was great to see Bill back in the bay and still competitive. Not an easy day for the larger gentlemen. In fact Charlie Taylor must have decided they were not his conditions and did not show up. Shaun Doran was licking his lips before the race as these conditions certainly suit him. Richard Ramsey will be licking himself that he missed out on what would have been ideal for him.

True to form Shaun got a great start and never really looked back. The first lap was a bit of a procession, so a good start was critical. Shaun, Colin, Chris made the early running and put a bit of distance between them and the next batch. Conor Simms made up a lot of ground after a poorish start. Des Magee was also making good ground in the lighter conditions as was Keith Storey, who was making a return to racing after his skiing accident. Good to see him back on the water and his lack of racing was not obvious. Bill O'Hara was also closing the gap after an average start. Not his ideal conditions but proved that he has boat speed in any conditions. Too many Sundays in front of the TV hurt his series!!!

No one was able to catch Shaun although Chris Boyd made a valiant effort to hunt him down. Shaun claimed his first bullet of this series with Chris second and Colin Leonard in 3rd this week. Conor had pushed himself into 4th and Keith had an excellent 6th place scrapping with Des and myself at the end for those places.

David Smyth also enjoyed these conditions and was 1st in the silver fleet with Micky Forbes trying his eyestrings out to get past him. Charlie WH was 3rd in the silver fleet. Ed claimed 1st Bronze just ahead of John and Neil.

Heading into the last race Colin Leonard would appear to have the series wrapped up after some excellent displays of racing. Mind you if Rusty had completed a full series it would have made it interesting. Well done Colin. Chris also did a great job in some challenging conditions through-out the winter months and unlikely that he will be caught in second. John Simms, myself, Adam Fermor and Charlie Taylor will be all trying to claim the last podium place next week..... and it looks as if it could be windy so John and Charlie will be smiling.

Micky leads the silver fleet but Charlie WH is determined to rain on his parade!! In Bronze fleet James Moore leads from Ed and John.

Hopefully champagne sailing next Sunday with a few beers afterwards at the prize giving .

See you Sunday
Maxi