

Roadford Topper Open 4th September 2011

On the 4th of September 2011 47 Topper sailors were greeted with light winds and sun. It was a little light relief for the sailors and parents who had camped overnight and participated in the open training and the parent's race the day before. But true to the forecasters word, another front arrived shortly, bringing wind for the morning and even more wind and rain for the afternoon.

In Race 1 the sailors started as they meant go on, with a near perfect start. There was close racing throughout the fleet and tight mark roundings, meaning there were many changes in positions. It was Jacob Hutchings who finally took line honours ahead of Ross McFarlane in second and Ellie Cumpsty finished third.

Race 2 started in sunshine and a freshening breeze which made for some tiring and occasionally wet sailing for some of the less experienced. This time it was Ellie who took an early lead which she maintained for the remainder of the race. Jacob Hutchings had been looking promisingly good in second on the second beat until disaster struck and his outhaul broke. Attempts to repair on the water were unfortunately unsuccessful and he was forced to retire. Ross managed to capitalise on the failure finishing a consistent second with Henry Martindale in third.

After a short break ashore for pasta, Race 3 commenced. Ross and Ellie took delight in the windier conditions and forged a clear lead ahead of the rest of the fleet. It was Ross who eventually gained the upper hand crossing the line ahead of Ellie. Henry once again finished third.

Race 4 kicked off in heavy rain and windy conditions. Ross taking confidence from the previous three races set about finishing the job off. He lead for most of the race and gained a clear advantage over the chasing pack. But it was not going to be an easy win. Confusion on whether the boats were finishing on the second lap not third allowed some boats to catch him up and take the lead. Ross, to his credit, appeared to remain calm and managed to score his second bullet of the day, showing he was the deserved winner. Jacob followed close behind in second with Luke Robertson hot on his heels.

Overall Ross McFarlane of Castle Cove SC finished 1st, Ellie Cumpsty of Chew Valley SC finished 2nd and 1st Female. Home sailor Jacob Hutchings managed to extend his overall lead in the Traveller series by finishing 3rd.

In the fleet of ten 4.2s Ellie Hutchings of Roadford Lake SC finished comfortably 1st 4.2 and a credible 25th overall. It was a close battle between 2nd and 3rd 4.2 but Alex McFarlane of Castle Cove SC managed to finish just 2 points ahead of Dittisham SC sailor Luke Gribbin. Alex and Luke finished 32nd and 33rd respectfully overall.

A further mention should go to Joel Robertson the winner of the Endeavour Trophy, who like so many other sailors near the back of the fleet suffered many capsize but refused to give up in the challenging conditions. Well Done to them!

Last but by no means least I would like to say a big Thank You to all the volunteers and parents who together made the event such a great success.

By Alex Hutchings