

Wilsonian 29er Open Meeting 10/11 October 2009

The 29ers were met with a building breeze on Saturday 10th October at Wilsonian Sailing Club to compete in the club's first 29er open meeting.

As the sailors prepared themselves for the first start, a large ship weaved its way along the Medway, resulting in the first start being postponed. The 5 boats then took delight in surfing on the wake left behind! Once the race track was cleared, Race 1 got underway with Alex and Ed LeGassick leading initially from Aaron Smith and Alec Rodgers. However, when Alex and Ed missed the upwind gate and had to turn back, Aaron and Alec pulled away to take the first win. A tough battle ensued behind them for second, though, as Matt Goacher and Tim Linsell fought back from a poor start to pip Paul Smith and Nicola Smith to the finish line. In Race 2, Matt and Tim led for the first lap before a costly capsized let Aaron and Alec through to take the win. Race 2 turned out to be a copy of Race 1 as Matt and Tim once again nipped through to take second with Paul and Nicola just a boatlength behind. With the wind now increasing to 17knots, Race 3 was started in perfect conditions. Matt and Tim got off to a good start and led the race from start to finish. The real drama was behind; however, where Aaron and Alec were forced to sail their boats off to pull back from an early capsized on the line. They finished second with Paul and Nicola showing perfect consistency with another 3rd place. In Race 4, Aaron and Alec finished off their day with another win, hotly pursued by Matt and Tim. Alex and Ed crossed the line in 3rd, followed by Martin Lown and Olly Legg and then Paul and Nicola in 5th after capsizing. At the end of the first day, it was still all to play for with only a couple of points separating the boats heading into Sunday's racing.

When all the boats were packed up, a meal was served at the club with the large portions especially welcomed by the sailors! The evening was great fun and everyone enjoyed looking through the hundreds of stunning photos that had been taken on the water.

Sunday started bright and early as the 29ers joined the club members for racing. Whereas Saturday comprised of traditional Windward/Leeward courses, Sunday allowed sailors to see a bit more of the Medway as there was plenty of water to play with. The 29ers went off as first start from the club line to complete several laps on a windward/leeward loop. The wind had increased from Saturday and everyone on the water was having a great time. There were plenty of positional changes during the race and Matt and Tim began to reel in Aaron and Alec from a big lead. As the leading boats turned the corner towards the club, the parents in the clubhouse were treated to a grandstand finish with Aaron and Alec winning by a few boatlengths. After lunch, a different course was set with the 29ers completing a round-the-cans style race. The 29ers set off with kites up for a 4 mile run down the Medway to the leeward mark. With big gusts now blowing down the river, all the sailors had big grins on their faces! At the bottom mark, Matt and Tim led convincingly from Paul and Nicola with Aaron and Alec chasing hard after an early capsized had put them to the back. The boats then raced around a triangle before the beat home ended in a showdown finish. As Matt and Tim turned the corner round the island, Aaron and

Alec picked a better route on the tide. Closing the gap on the final loop, the two boats were locked together as they headed towards the club. This time around, Matt and Tim held on to take the win.

At the end of a fantastic weekend, generous prizes were given by the club. Aaron and Alec took first overall, beating Matt and Tim by two points. Third were Paul and Nicola after a consistent weekend, followed by Alex and Ed LeGassick in fourth and Martin Lown and Olly Legg in fifth. Thanks should go to Wilsonian Sailing Club who provided brilliant conditions, excellent race management in using the wide expanses of the Medway and were very welcoming to the 29ers.