

**National Championship  
2007 at Sunderland YC**  
Report by David Matthews

Bright summer sunshine and a fresh northwest wind welcomed the fourteen competitors to the 2007 Sonata National Championships hosted by Sunderland Yacht Club. Title sponsorship from Hartlepool Marina insured an impressive prize list including a brand new suit of Goacher sails. As a prelude to the National Championships a number of visiting boats took the opportunity to sharpen their boat handling skills by competing in Sunderland's annual Roker Regatta over the August bank holiday weekend.

**Day 1 (27/08/07)**

The morning's north-westerly force 4 to 5 wind moderated to force 3 to 4 just before the first race of the championship series. *Sonic's* over eagerness on the start line resulted in OCS for race one. The wind was slightly shift. *Eric the Boat* demonstrated how to play the shifts, leading at mark one, closely followed by *Blue Tack* and these initial positions were held to the end of the race. Race two saw *High and Dry* OCS, but re-crossed the start line without losing too much ground to the opposition. Those boats that went up the left side of the beat moved into the new breeze first and gained significantly. *Eric the Boat* went on to win race two followed by *Point Five* and *Stratagem*. Day one finished with a welcome party for the competitors with wine and nibbles at Sunderland Yacht Club, followed by a horse-race night in aid of the RNLI. A substantial sum was raised largely due to the sailor's poor choice of horses!

**Day 2 (28/08/07)**

Racing was postponed until noon to allow the gentle breeze to fill in from the south. Race three started in force three with a developing swell providing a new experience for *Point Five* sailing on the sea for the first time with great success following *Eric the Boat* to finish in second place. Race four saw close racing with places gained and lost depending on the downwind strategy against the tide and clean leeward mark roundings. *Eric the Boat* continued his winning ways with *Blue Tack* coming second followed by *Point Five*. Following requests from the competitors before the series started the Race Officer took the opportunity to hold an additional race due to the good conditions. The final race of the day saw a good battle develop between *Blue Tack* and *High and Dry* only slightly astern of *Eric the Boat* at the finish. The AGM was held after the racing on day 2.

**Day 3 (29/08/07)**

Due to the Race Officer's expectation of sea breezes cancelling out the gradient breeze it was agreed to hold shorter races in preference to the scheduled long distance race. Racing started on time with a force 4 northerly wind with a choppy sea. *Eric the Boat* showed her dominance in these conditions to win convincingly, with *Point Five* second. The next race saw the wind ease slightly but *Eric the Boat* still excelled in the conditions, followed home by *Point Five* with *So* taking third. After a reasonable wait in sunny conditions the predicted sea breeze filled. The over eager fleet brought about two general recalls encouraging the Race Officer to produce the Black Flag. When the race got way *Peg* lead the fleet off the line from the favoured end, however, *High and Dry* soon passed *Peg* and was battling for the lead with *Eric the Boat*. *High and Dry* were just pipped by *Eric the Boat* by one second at the finish and with *A Sharp Exit* finishing third. The Curry and Quiz night was held on the evening of day 3 which finally saw *Eric the Boat* beaten for the only time during the championship – trounced by a team from Sunderland Yacht Club.

**Day 4 (30/08/07)**

The forecast brisk north-westerly arrived with racing starting on time. Only a few brave souls opted to use the No.1 Genoa. The wind was at its strongest down the first run making good spinnaker handling a premium. The usual boats appeared at the front of the fleet holding their positions to the finishing line. The next race saw the wind ease a little, encouraging more of the fleet to change up to their No.1, although finishing positions remained similar to the first race. The final race of the day saw most boats with No.1s at the start but the wind

freshened producing some exciting moments down the run. Bad luck aboard *Spindrift* resulted in a broken spinnaker pole causing her retirement. *Eric the Boat* had done enough to retain the National title with a day to spare but other places were still to fight for. A terrific days sailing was rounded off with the Championship dinner held in the clubhouse which was well supported by all the competing crews.

#### Day 5 (31/08/07)

The final day was started in over 30 knots of north-westerly breeze which encouraged some of the visiting boats to lift out on the club crane ready for a quick getaway. The reduced fleet was lead by *Blue Tack* followed by the improving *Kallista* revelling in the conditions with *Sonic* third and *White Magic* fourth, enabling her to beat *Miss Elaine* by a small margin. The prizegiving was held promptly to allow the travelling competitors to get away early afternoon. Particular thanks were expressed to Hartlepool Marina, the events title sponsor along with Keels on Wheels, Storrar Marine, and Goacher Sails as daily race day sponsors. A special award was made to Mrs Alison Kirkham (*Storm in G Cup*) for best placed pregnant helm at this years National Championship. Steve Goacher thanked Sunderland Yacht Club for the warmth of their hospitality, the quality of their race management team, the high standard of the club's facilities, and for an excellent event all-round.

Club	Helm	Boat	No	R1	R2	R3	R4	R9	R5	R10	R11	R6	R7	R12	R8	Pts	Pos
Royal Windermere	Steve Goacher	Eric the Boat	8748	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	15	8	1
Sunderland YC	David Boatman	Blue Tack	8189	2	11	3	2	2	3	8	5	2	2	2	1	16	2
Royal Windermere YC	Harold Lefton	Point Five	8362	4	2	2	3	4	2	2	4	3	5	4	15	22	3
	Martin Price	High & Dry	8285	3	10	5	4	3	6	5	2	6	3	3	15	28	4
SCYC	Martin Hartley	A Sharp Exit	8249	6	8	4	6	7	5	7	3	4	4	6	15	38	5
Aberdeen & Stonehaven YC	Neil McLure	So	8217	5	4	6	5	5	7	3	6	8	15	5	15	39	6
Sunderland YC	Paul Davis	Sonic	8084	15	7	8	9	6	4	6	8	7	6	8	3	47	7
Sunderland YC	Jim Williamson	Stratagem	8375	8	3	7	8	15	8	4	10	5	7	7	15	49	8
Sunderland YC	Malcolm Scott	Kallista	8404	11	5	10	13	8	10	13	7	9	11	10	2	61	9
Sunderland YC	Angus Corry	Spindrift	8169	7	6	9	7	11	9	10	9	11	10	15	15	67	10
Sunderland YC	David Matthews	White Magic	8872	10	9	12	10	10	15	12	11	12	9	9	4	72	11
Dalgety Bay SC	Kenny Allen	Miss Elaine	8089	9	12	13	12	9	11	9	12	10	8	11	15	79	12
Sunderland YC	Alison Kirkham	Storm in a G Cup	8371	12	15	11	11	13	12	11	13	15	15	15	15	98	13
Tees & Hartlepool YC	Ian Holtby	Peg	8156	15	13	14	14	12	13	14	14	13	12	12	15	103	14