

Sonata National Championships 2012 at the Medway Yacht Club

After weeks of heavy wind and rain, the entrants of Sonata National Championships awoke on Monday to cloudless skies and not a breath of wind. The panic evident in the organisers face was however short lived as the 25 Degree heat ensured a sea breeze started to fill and race one was underway before lunch. The furthest travelled visitor, White Magic, from Sunderland Yacht Club posted an early victory in the series and sent themselves up to be close contenders for the title of National Champions. A strong second from BFG gave the home fleet a hope of a local winner. White Magic picked up a second bullet in the third race of the day whilst Poole boat Presto took the second win. Medway local Mike Harrison in Musical Express also picked up a second place for the home fleet. White Magic led the field at the end of day one.

The weather for day two was a repeat of the first day and another day of Windward/Leeward courses faced the competitors. Musical Express picked up the first win of the day followed by White Magic, cementing their place at the top. Reigning champion Simon Farren in Hyde Kent posted a third place. White Magic won the second race convincingly with Presto hot on their heels before the Poole boat went on to take the final victory of the day. White Magic retained their lead at the end of the day, three points clear of Presto.

Wednesday brought the relief of a long distance round the cans race to the now dizzy competitors. By the time the sea breeze filled in the fleet faced a foul tide beat in light airs, reaching the container port before setting the spinnakers for home. Presto crossed the line first closing in on White Magic who were on their heels for second place.

It was back to Windward/Leewards for Thursday with the ebbing tide catching several boats out leaving them grounded on the mud. Presto showed the winning spirit after a grounding near Kingsnorth Power Station by jumping in to free their boat from the East Coast's tight grip. This left them in second place to a seemingly unbeatable White Magic. Chris Bently's BFG returned to form for Race 9 posting a convincing win. Another second place awaited Presto with a third for their Poole colleagues Selene. A win for Presto in the third race of the day ensured that they went into Friday just two points clear at the top of the table, overturning White Magic's lead.

With all to play for on Friday, the wind was not reading the script. The continued light breeze from the north-west was showing no sign of strengthening, and with overcast skies, little chance of a sea breeze. Just after midday the fleet headed out in search of wind, and around half past one a brave call by the race officer, Richard Stone, got the final race under way. In difficult condition the race was won by Selene with Hyde Kent in second place. Crucially Presto stayed in front of White Magic to seal their well deserved victory.

Joe Cross had sailed a great regatta to bring his team home at the top of the leader board. Poignantly, they were crowned National Champions on the 18th birthday of one of their team, Mikey, who was due to sail that week before being tragically knocked off his bike and killed in a road accident in May. Their boat sported the text "Racing for Mikey" and they ended up Winning for Mikey. Truly deserving champions.