

Snipe South-Eastern Championship 10th and 11th September 2022

Nine Snipes came together at Blackwater Sailing Club to compete for the 2022 South-eastern Championship on the 10th and 11th of September, with entrants from Chichester, Bough Beech in Kent and Blackwater SC. The event was met with mild September weather and at the briefing, the Commodore welcomed visitors and gave a tribute to the late Queen Elizabeth II followed by a minutes silence.

Once the boats had all launched and arrived at the race area, the race committee were immediately met with challenging wind conditions and had to postpone the first start as the wind was shifting significantly making setting a course difficult. The wayfarers set off and then the snipes followed 5 minutes later for each of the races.

Race one saw Matthew Wolstenholme and Lloyd Roberts, who had just returned from the Snipe World Championships in Portugal hold off the challenge from local sailor Guy Welch and his Blackwater Cadet crew, Sam Glover who came in second. The fight for third, fourth and fifth was close with Peter Wolstenholme and his local Blackwater Cadet crew, Charlie Bourne finishing third. Other local Cadet, Luca Batley kindly volunteered to sail with an experienced member of the class, Brian Gregory and they finished 6th. Race two with the tide still flooding favoured the local knowledge of Richard and Debbie Marshall who took an early lead, until the final beat where a big shift at the windward mark swapped positions round with Wolstenholme/Bourne benefiting to take the lead, where they remained for the final leg. Race three saw a Port/Starboard incident between the Marshalls and visitors from Kent, Sue and Steve Roberts, with the Marshalls having to complete a 720 resulting in them being last off the start line. By now the tide was in full ebb, so the fleet chose to stick to the right of the course. The Marshalls sailed for clear air to try and catch-up and picked the left-hand side of the course. There was clearly more wind and favourable shifts on that side and they rounded the windward mark first with over two minutes to spare and remained in that position for the rest of the race, second place went to Wolstenholme/Roberts. The fleet completed the day's sailing and enjoyed a Fish and Chip dinner, some drinks and games on the Patio, whilst making the most of the warm evening.

Sunday started off with very low visibility, and racing was postponed for a short while to enable a briefing to be held by the race committee. The fog finally lifted and the fleets headed down to the start area by Clarks, with a couple of boats being towed. The wind gently filled in and the racing began with a smaller course, which again was excellently handled by the Race Committee. The gentle wind and local tidal knowledge favoured Welch/Glover meaning that they were leading for much of race four, and it looked like they would secure their first win, but the experience of Wolstenholme/Batley and the fact that Welch/Glover picked up some weed, meant that they had to settle for second. Race five saw an early lead established by Wolstenholme/Roberts meaning that the final race would be the deciding race for the event between father and son. Third, fourth and fifth was also to be decided in Race six. The fleet set off for the final race with more breeze, but with some big shifts throughout causing a number of different leaders throughout the race. It finished with the experience of the senior Wolstenholme paying off resulting in both father and son having a total of 8 points after discard. On count back, Peter Wolstenholme and Charlie Bourne were winners, with Matthew Wolstenholme and Lloyd Roberts coming in second. Richard and Debbie Marshall came in third and Guy Welch and Sam Glover finished in Fourth.

Fantastic sailing with some incredibly close racing was the theme for the weekend. Thank you to the local cadets that volunteered to sail for the weekend as it meant that more snipes could

sail and hopefully they gained some further experience of fleet racing. A special thanks goes to the fantastic race committee, Andy Pickering, Dave Hall, Ewan Harris, Clem Evans (on Saturday) who were ably assisted by Florence Pickering in charge of the flags having done some excellent preparation learning the various race flags. Much thanks of course to Ian and Viv Stunt for the use of Catoman as the committee boat. The visitors thoroughly enjoyed their sailing and look forward to coming back to the club again next year.

Richard Marshall