

Medway Yacht Club

Dear Dragoners

The 2018 Racing Season kicked-off with a cracking competitive race. The day did not look too promising; it was chilly, with a light wind blowing from the NNW, and grey skies threatening rain.

Without going a long way down river, a NNW is a difficult wind direction to get a good beat on the upper River Medway. Going down river is not advisable in light conditions, with an ebbing tide. We opted for a special course that was positioned in the upper part of the river on the first bend down river from the Club, passing Meres Corner and then down to Gillingham Reach. This gave us five potentially good beats against the NNW wind direction. We had a Club-line start, then two loops from B28 and back up to B31, followed by three loops from B26 and back to B31, finish at B30. Perhaps a tad ambitious given the lack of wind and an ebbing tide, nevertheless we Dragoners are optimistic souls and seven boats went out.

Wow! What a thrillingly competitive race we had. OCD was smartly away from the line and managed to get a nose ahead by following the South Shore, with the main fleet in the middle of the river. The wind was fickle and flukey as the fleet raced down past 'Meres' Corner to the first rounding mark at B28, located halfway down Gillingham Reach. Confusion struck as Whistle decided to go for a Port rounding as all the other boats were going for a Starboard rounding - the special course stated that all roundings should be to Starboard. This was to keep the fleet out of the shallows located off Hoo Marina. *Ah... overcoming the challenges of the long winter sleep dulling the senses.*

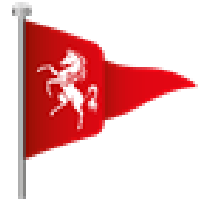
Success came and went in the course of the race - OCD fell behind Fit Chick after the confusion at the first mark and then managed to regain the lead by going to the South Shore and picking up a lifting wind that brought them back on a sustained lift up past Meres Corner. At B31, the up-wind rounding, OCD was first to turn and then broke away from the fleet on the down-wind leg, aided by an ebbing Tide. Fit Chick was last at the first down-wind turn

The chasing Fleet fell behind by almost a leg - but how things can quickly change soon FLOS and Fit Chick started to narrow OCD's lead (how did they do that??), with COY, Whistle, Suti, and Gandalf also getting into the spirit of a good chase. After each leg boat positions changed and the chasing fleet got ever closer to OCD.

We did not manage to complete the planned five loops and finished at B30, after three circuits. The finishing line was biased and this created late opportunities for a reversal of fortune if a boat's last two or three tacks were misjudged, or failed to catch the flukey wind, or took them too far into deep water and the ebbing tide. It was a close battle all the way to the line for all the fleet.

Finally the results at the line, it was: OCD first, followed by Fit Chick, then Gandalf, then FLOS, then Whistle, then COY and finally SUTI. The consensus was: *'what a great race, and thank goodness it was over'*. It was getting colder and the wind was fading. The fleet had to be towed up Heart Break Reach and back to the Club's moorings.

A tired and cold, but happy group of Dragoners, then warmed up in the bar, and enjoyed the free buffet



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laid on by the Club and Galley. A great way to start the new Sailing Season, many thanks to the Commodore and the leadership team for providing the hot food.

BDA and MDF Subscriptions

Reminder to all Fleet Members: Please ensure you have paid your BDA Fees for your boat and yourself. If you have not paid, the Fleet Rules may cause your results to be nullified and removed from the Scoring Tables.

To Boat Owners: we still have a few regular crew members who have not paid their MDF membership Annual Subscriptions (£10 per crew member). This is a gentle reminder to Owners/ Skippers, to ensure their crew members have paid their subs. This will save me the embarrassment of having to chase the few people who have not paid.

Training on the 5th & 6th May

Stavros (Martin Payne) will be joining us for two half days of training next week-end. We have six boats lined up to participate and share the costs. **If you wish to join the training the cost per boat is £85, for six boats and £72 per boat, if seven boats participate. Currently these are the boats that are participating: FLOS, Fit Chick, Gandalf, Suti, COY and OCD. Non-participating boats may race as normal, but will not be part of the training on the water nor take part in the onshore feedback/ coaching session.**

Social Events

We are holding our Dragon Bingo & Supper Night on the 12th May. *Argh 'Bingo you may say'*. This is the second year we will have held this event and if last year's evening is anything to go by. It will be a very funny and entertaining evening. Put the date in you diaries and come along. I will be sending out a detail email and expect a call, reminding you to come along.

Regards to all

David H

Dragon Captain