

The final racing of the Watling Streetworks Winter Series took place at West Baldwin Reservoir on Sunday morning. The conditions, mostly sunny and with a, not so common, northerly breeze blowing down the valley, perhaps spring has finally sprung!

Although the breeze may not have been as steady as it would usually be from the north it was good enough to bring a fleet of eleven, including Jim Whitelegg (Gull) to the start.

A starboard (clockwise) course was set by the Race Officer using the full length of the lake. A crowded start saw Andrew Dean (Radial) first away and sadly first to find the patch near the first mark with no wind. The majority of the fleet got ahead with Dave Batchelor (Hadron) taking the lead on the water.

During the race the breeze picked up a little, too much for the Gull and crew, but not enough for Batch to get far enough ahead of the chasing group of Aero 5's and Radials. After correction James Penn (Radial) was first, one second ahead of Junior, Thomas Watterson (Aero 5) who was in turn one second ahead of third place Batch.

This is cause for celebration in the Penn household, for as far as your correspondent can see it's James' first win on the lake.

For Race two the wind was increasing, sunshine and no rain, spring still holding over the same course. Andrew was not only first at the first mark but held it until the second before being overtaken by Dave Batch. This time it was Junior, Thomas who took up the chase and managed to keep the margin down to only ten seconds on the water. With the wind increasing the 'we like a breeze Hyett's', Jason and Roo moved up the fleet.

Yet again, Batchelor was not far enough ahead at the finish and took 4th place on correction. The win going to Thomas Watterson, Andrew Dean second and first lady, Junior Roo Hyett third.

Although this may not have been the best winter series for racing with many cancellations for both too much wind or too little, the racing has been very close and fully inclusive with competitors from pre-teens to septuagenarians!

Only the Race Officer knows who has claimed overall victory for the 2023/24 Watling Streetworks Winter Series. The prizegiving will be held after the IOM Copiers Easter Regatta which is being hosted by Manx Sailing & Cruising Club on Saturday 30 March in Ramsey Bay. The first Regatta of the 2024 season.

MS&CC would like to thank Doug Watling of Watling Streetworks for continuing to support our winter sailing, Keith Poole for Race Officer duties and all the Patrol Boat crews who have volunteered their time.