

Blaze 2006 Inlands at QMSC

Exactly 30 boats from 17 clubs came to the line for the 2006 Blaze Inlands held at QMSC for the first time over the weekend of 14/15th October. The first days racing started in a fickle and variable F2 easterly and the three races were dominated by Mike Lyons (720) of Burghfield defending his title from 2005. Equally as consistent was Rien Zilvold (400) of Whitstable who posted three seconds and there was quite a scrap between the two leaders throughout the day. He in turn was pursued by Christian Smart of Pembrokeshire YC (723) who scored two thirds and heavyweight John Ainsworth of Weaver SC (656) who was third in the last race showing that you do not have to be a lightweight to be effective in the light stuff albeit the wind was finally rising to the occasion. Newly appointed class secretary Paul Taylor showed that he too can really do the light stuff with a 4th in Race two but fell victim to an untypical gust in race three when he inverted the boat. The start of race three prior to this was recalled and the 'Z' flag applied to the restart catching a couple of boats midline. After the racing finished the class soon quickly retired to the QMSC bar at the end of the day for its annual AGM.

Sunday promised much better racing with a NE F3-4 and sunshine. The fleet got briskly away on time with the heavier set looking for a bit of natural justice! Lyons quickly got on with the task in hand and pulled away again in race 4 but this time had to deal with a different set of pursuers. Veteran Tim Davison (731) and Nick Miller (700) came through this time and held these positions until the end in difficult tactical conditions particularly evident near the windward mark. The gusty shifts were significant enough by now to find a few victims around the windward mark or on the runs. In race 5 Davison capsized letting Smart and Ainsworth plus Miller through to chase Lyons.

The final race was held in the strongest wind of the meeting and the Blazes were really beginning to move by now with some upwind planning and properly fast reaches. Peter Barlow of Burghfield found the right side of the first run to pull through the early leaders who had tactically bet on the left hand side. He held this position until an awkward gybe at the wing mark saw him splashdown allowing Lyons through. Although he recovered quickly enough to stay in second he was later caught by Miller and Smart who were themselves pursued by Rod Porteus of the home club who finished fourth.

The 2006 Inlands will be remembered for the efficient race organisation of QMSC and a range of conditions with something for everybody. With numbers attending Blaze meetings still growing throughout the year and more recently the appointment of a new builder (Cirrus Raceboats / Rondar) who already have new boat orders the class is optimistically looking forward to next season.