

Sailing Captains report for AGM

After a busy season, with the best weather in a number of years club racing started and finished with the Saturday mini-series, which has been popular with competitors and was well attended. Sailors have requested that this continues in the same vein.

June saw the British Isles Flying Fifteen Championship with 50+ boats and 100+ sailors coming to the club. Sponsorship came by way of our own ff15 veteran John McCann of Willowbrook Foods. Much organisation went into running such a prestigious event with those on the organising side also taking part in the racing. Order of the day was clear skies and no wind however the race officer managed to squeeze in the minimum of 3 races on the last day to make a series and as such a successful event, won by a regular traveller to SLYC, Steve Goacher.

The number of volunteers both on and off the water was impressive and heart warming seeing so many come together to make a great event and advert for our club. I would like to extend heartfelt thanks to all those who gave their time and effort.

Club racing continued throughout the season to its normal high standard and attendance, with everyone basking in the Mediterranean weather. Indeed, the River class has asked for a further night of racing during the week. A River class start on Thursday night will be added to the racing calendar for next season.

With a greater number of dinghy sailors coming through the ranks, there has been some appetite for further racing and so a dinghy start will be added to Saturday mini-series racing utilising the inner marks. Tuesday dinghy sailing and racing under the tutelage of Jack Kennedy and supervision of training Captain, Susan McKnight will continue to develop our dinghy sailors.

Another highlight of the season was, as always, SLYC regatta. This was a great success despite the threats and attempts of the weather to have it otherwise. Good racing was had by all competitors from home and around the lough. The day was rounded off by prize giving and party in the clubhouse. All in all, a very enjoyable day, and night, for all concerned.

All too soon the season came to an end with the Frosty series with good numbers attending from around the lough. Excellent racing was had by all with only 1 race being missed due to no wind. Thanks to PJ Gault and crew for providing the courses. This was rounded off with the Frostie prize giving/party which had the clubhouse full and rocking once again.

SLYC has over the years produced capable, competitive and successful sailors. This year has been no exception. Our sailors have excelled around the lough and further afield to the extent that it would be impossible to name them all, however our congratulations should be extended to all.

Of note, we have 2 Flying Fifteen crews, Roger Chamberlain/Charlie Horder and Andy/Rory Martin qualified for Team Ireland to compete in the World Championships in 2019. Well done.

Worthy of individual note and praise is the achievement of our former Olympian Peter Kennedy. Peter is still at the top of Irish Sailing and was chosen by the SB20 class to attend the Helmsman Championship at Lough Ree Yacht Club, racing against the best from all classes that Ireland could muster. Peter competed successfully to win and be named as 'All Ireland Champion'. Congratulations from all at the club.

With the cold of winter starting to bite, we look forward to next season and all that it brings in the way of club racing, regattas and visiting events.

Due in no small part to the enthusiasm of our volunteers and organisers we have been asked to host the SB20 Northernns on behalf of the SB20 association of Ireland. On a larger scale we will also be hosting the RS Eurocup, a European championship for the RS200 over 4 days, the last 2 of which will also play host to the RS400 Northernns. Plans have started for the events and the good will of the members/volunteers will play a massive part in making these successful events showcasing Strangford Lough and in particular Strangford Lough Yacht Club, for its great sailing and beauty to visitors from around Europe.

I look forward to seeing you all on the water next season.

Phil Quinn

Sailing Captain