

flying fifteen Mallorca

22 April, Practice – Pollensa

This was our final practice before Palma Vela. 4 boats turned up and we had a series of quick starts, to get our eye in.

Then followed 3 short races, with results spread evenly between *fuego fatuo* (John Walker & Francisco Gadala-Maria), *Dragonfly* (Michael Beecken & Marko) and *ffugue* (Stephen Babbage & Teresa Parry). The start system worked well, although some photos were out of line as the boat had swung a little.

May 4-7 Palma Vela – RCNP, Palma

Once again we were invited to join the Palma Vela regatta. This year it also was our Mallorca Championships. We were privileged to have the President of The Belgian Flying Fifteen Association coming to sail with us, crewed by Jonny Fullerton.

On the Wednesday before the regatta a group of us gathered at Pollensa to bring the boats to Palma. The first two were already to go, and were hitched up and started the trip. Meanwhile, those Michael Clough and Stephen stayed in Pollensa to prepare Gekko, ESP and Speedy Gonzalez.

Ffugue's trailer suspension collapsed as they came to the end of the motorway near Portixol. Thanks to Hugh and John's ingenuity with trailer straps, they managed to get the boat to a safe place behind the conference centre, from where she was later taken on a grua to RCNP.

On arrival back I Pollensa, the team agreed it was lunchtime, and repaired to Can Ferrà ("the restaurant in the alley"). We were lucky – this was their first day of the season! Toni was helpful as always, and although they hadn't got a menu del dia ready, came up with a superb meal including rabbit for the main course.

Well fed, we sent the next two boats off to Palma, where they arrived an hour later. Stephen then set to preparing *ffugue* and *gekko* whilst Hugh went back for the last boat – *ESP*.

Thursday was a busy day, finishing boat preparation and craning into the water. Once completed, we enjoyed the RCNP hospitality, before adjourning to Patxi for dinner. Our guest Veronique Hachez arrived later in the evening, and met us there. Later on our other visitors from Ireland – Alan and Chris – joined the party, which continued, and then moved on for a nightcap.

On Friday we were to start at 13:00, which should have given a little extra time for the wind to kick in. All boats arrived at the start in time to sit and wait some more for the breeze. *Stormtrooper* lived up to her name, with David Miles & Chris Doorly taking first place, followed by Michael Clough & Alan

Green in *Speedy Gonzales*, with *fuego fatuo* (John Walker & Francisco Gadala-Maria) third.

The wind stayed light for race 2, with *Speedy Gonzales* taking first, *fuego fatuo* second and *Stormtrooper* third.

Race 3 started in very light and shifty airs, which ultimately favoured the right side of the beat. *Gekko* (Hamish Goddard & Hugh Birley) had taken a flyer in that direction, and came out at the top, with *Dragonfly* (Michael Beecken & Tommy Rietzschel) and *ffugue* (Stephen Babbage & Teresa Parry) close behind. When *Ffugue* rounded the windward mark, the breeze had shifted enough for them to hoist the spinnaker, and the wind continued to shift so that they were on a dead run by the spreader mark 200 metres later. Immediately a rib appeared, bearing the chequered N flag to abandon the race.

We waited another half hour for the wind to stabilise, and just as we thought it was too late in the day, the committee began a start sequence. The J's and Dragons got off OK, but the wind was already dropping for our start. *Ffugue* and *gekko* both had took what proved to be the advantageous side of the course, but then suffered from a small current on the windward mark, which allowed *Stormtrooper* and *Speedy* to slip through, leaving *ffugue* bouncing of the mark and taking a penalty. They had got about a hundred metres down the first run, with a slightly more stable breeze, when the "N" appeared again. That was it for the day. With *Speedy* leading on 3 points, *Stormtrooper* on 4, and *fuego fatuo* on 5.

Day two dawned with a stronger breeze, and promised a good day's racing. *Ffugue* had a good start, and was in contention coming to the top mark when the kicker mast fitting pulled out. Given the strengthening breeze, there was no way to sail the downwind legs, and she was forced to pull out of the racing for the day.

Speedy took three firsts, with *Stormtrooper* 2-3-2 and *fuego fatuo* 3-4-3; the missing second place going to a very well sailed *Gekko* in the middle race. *ESP* (Veronique Hachez & Jonny Fullerton) also sailed a good middle race, coming close behind *fuego fatuo*.

On Sunday, we had even more breeze, promising an exciting final shoot out. Although out of contention for the series, *ffugue* was repaired and back on the course, taking 5 and 4 in the first two races, *Speedy* again 2 firsts, *Stormtrooper* 2-4 and *fuego fatuo* two thirds. *Dragonfly* sailed her best race, with a 2 in the first of the day.

Coming into the final race, *Speedy* was unassailable, with *Stormtrooper* and *fuego fatuo* fighting for second. The wind had shifted a bit, and the right side of the course became favoured shortly after the start. *Ffugue* joined *Speedy* and *Stormtrooper* up the beat, with *Dragonfly* next. The first three arrived close at the top mark and planed across to the spreader. *Ffugue* then hoisted the spinnaker, and set about catching *Stormtrooper*. They were doing so at speed, until the gybe, when the repaired kicking strap burst the remaining

mast fitting, forcing another retirement, allowing *Dragonfly* up to third. And so the race finished, with *Speedy* taking another first.

And so, Michael and Alan took the series with 7 first places counting, followed by *Stormtrooper* and then *fuego fatuo*. The Mallorca Championships were scored using the same results, but with all races counting, and no discards. This didn't actually change the outcome, with the all positions being the same.

Congratulations to Michael and Alan, and many thanks to RCNP for a great series. Especial thanks to Veronique for representing the Belgian fleet – we hope to see you soon. We will certainly be coming to Lac de la Plate Taille for the Belgian Nationals in October!

Results

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|------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|----|
| 1 ESP 3804 | <i>Speedy Gonzales</i> | Michael Clough / Alan Green | 7 |
| 2 ESP 3610 | <i>Stormtrooper III</i> | David Miles & Chris Doorly | 15 |
| 3 ESP 3577 | <i>fuego fatuo</i> | John Walker / Francisco Gadala-Maria | 21 |

Next up

- 4 June – Trofeo Formentor – Pollensa
- 24 June – Hugh Wilson Trophy - Pollensa
- 7 July – Balearic Championships - Pollensa

We've published the full 2017 calendar on our website

<http://flyingfifteen.mallorcaservice.de> and also Facebook [@f15spain](#).