

flying fifteen Mallorca

16 December – Trofeo Navidad, Pollensa

This was possibly the most bizarre race for a long time!

There were five each of cruisers and *flying fifteens*, with the latter having the first start. We were to go directly to a mark off Bon Aire and back, a simple windward leeward course. The wind was almost non-existent, and fickle.

Seeing just enough wind to get us going, Joan sounded the start and off we went! – slowly. The fleet spread out between the seaplane base and middle of the bay, all seeking any bit of wind. Initially *fuego fatuo* and *Triffid* – both on the bay side of the course – seemed to have the advantage – with about 20 metres between them. Then, from nowhere a breeze appeared to windward and spirited *Dragonfly* ahead like a bullet. As the wind reached the others, they accelerated, and started to catch up. In the meantime, the cruisers' start had sounded, and they had spent ten minutes going nowhere – not even able to cross the start.

Stormtrooper, the leeward most boat, had kept the breeze as it abandoned the others, and started to recover position, before losing the breeze too. With the fleet closing on Punta Avançada, Joan left the start and laid the leeward mark about 500 metres beyond the point. The wind was coming from all directions, at one stage *fuego fatuo* was running whilst *Stormtrooper* was hard on the wind coming up from behind. Despite being less than 50 metres away from *Stormtrooper*, both *Dragonfly* picked up a breeze and rocketed away. *fuego fatuo* caught the zephyr a few moments later and set off in pursuit, leaving *Stormtrooper* and *Triffid* wallowing off the point.

Dragonfly was 200 metres ahead rounding the mark, and *fuego fatuo* had a lot to make up. Approaching the point on the way back, they encountered the next two boats, who seemed not to have made any progress. The cruiser fleet was approaching slowly with spinnakers up. Once beyond the point, both leaders opted to go north, towards the seaplane base. *fuego* played the shifts, and “poc a poc” crept up on *Dragonfly*. Approaching the line, they were on starboard, and laying the line, with *Dragonfly* to leeward, not laying. All that was need was for the wind to hold, and not shift. But it was not to be, approaching the finish, *Dragonfly* tacked onto port, and crossed the line four seconds ahead of *fuego fatuo*. Some time later, *Stromtrooper* and *Triffid* followed, ahead of *Paragon*.

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|---|----------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | ESP 3600 | Dragonfly | Michael Beecken / Marco Haack |
| 2 | GBR 3577 | Fuego Fatuo | John Walker / Stephen Babbage |
| 3 | ESP 3610 | Stormtrooper III | David Miles / Corinne Onvlee |

2 January – New Year's Regatta, Pollensa

From Michael Beecken:

As usual the New Year's Regatta had been scheduled for the 2nd of January after years ago we found out that the first is not the day to handle the tiller.

5 *Flying Fifteens* had entered but Oliver had to cancel a few days before the race, due to problems in his yacht. Steve also cancelled just before the first race. Joan from RCNPP was so friendly to provide a rib and the marks and even brought the equipment to our Esplanada. Dear Joan: Happy New Year and thanks for your support!

The bay provided us with constant Force 3 westerly winds, so the start line had been laid into the middle between the harbour and Punta Avanzada. From the start the course would take us upwind to mark 1 in front of the harbour. After leaving this mark to port, the next destination was Isla Formentor, which had to be left to port as well.

Though sailing single handed, Michael in 3600 had the best start and could round the windward mark first. On the following downwind leg, he might have had a small (illegal) advantage with missing weight of a crew but could stay in the lead until Avanzada without being seriously attacked by other boats. On her way to Isla Formentor, *Dragonfly* chose the northerly course, where no other boat followed her and so she could extend her lead even more until getting to the island.

Tacking through the channel was a little less to *Dragonfly*'s advantage but she could enjoy her big advantage and nobody could be seen in the channel before she reached the small harbour, which was the finish of the first leg.

After emptying a few bottles of cava and having lunch, a gate start had been planned for the way back.

Dragonfly was lucky to be rabbit and so had to approach the coast sailing on port until all boats had passed her stern. This brought her close to the hills, where a wind shift gave her a good lift back to Avanzada. Again, in this second race nobody could even be a risk for *Dragonfly* and so she won the second race as well.

This was a really great sailing day and we thank all boat owners who entered this regatta and made it a big success. Oh, now that the regatta stress is over, I realise – There was only me...

1 ESP 3600 Dragonfly Michael Beecken 1/2

13 January – St Antoni Regatta – Pollensa

A brisk day saw 7 boats readying to launch – unfortunately only 13 sailors! Michael Clough was in Mallorca, but unfortunately without crew. Nevertheless,

Speedy Gonzales made it to the start, with the assistance of the RIB pushing him out of harbour.

With only 5 knots of breeze, the start was slow, and we set off up the short beat to the offset mark. *fuego fatuo* tacked off to clear her air, and arrived first at the mark – ahead of all those who had pointed high to lay in one. One around the mark, we set off for Punta Avançada and then Isla Formentor. There was a twist in the course, instead of just around the island and back, we were to do an extra lap of Formentor before coming back to the mark and finally the finish line.

Coming up to Avançada, most stayed a little high, and then hoisted spinnakers to take advantage of the slightly increased breeze. *fuego* continued to lead, followed by *Speedy Gonzales* and *ffugue*. Approaching the top of the island *Spanish Fly* slipped ahead of *ffugue* and set off down the inshore passage with its very fluky winds, which gybed them at one point.

Meanwhile, *fuego* had exited the channel and hardened up for the second time round. By the time the next few boats had got there, she had vanished completely. As *Triffid* and *Dragonfly* came out of the channel the wind continued to shift, and they both were forced to make a number of extra tacks to lay the island.

Fuego held her lead around the island the second time, and sped off towards Punta Avançada, followed somewhat later by *Speedy* and *Spanish Fly*. Unfortunately, the wind gods were fickle, and the leader's wind headed them into the bay, whilst those following were able to lay the point with ease – even freeing off and almost planing at times. Nevertheless, *fuego* managed to tack up to the point ahead of the others, and hold her lead to the finish, with *Stromtrooper* now ahead of *Spanish Fly*.

Ffugue arrived at the point ahead of *Dragonfly*, who then stayed high to be able to hoist her spinnaker later in the leg. However, the wind was still too close, and she dropped further back after flying the kite, but staying ahead of *Triffid* at the finish.

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|---|----------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | GBR 3577 | <i>Fuego Fatuo</i> | John Walker / Francisco Gadala Maria |
| 2 | ESP 3804 | <i>Speedy Gonzales</i> | Michael Clough (singlehanded) |
| 3 | ESP 3610 | <i>Stormtrooper III</i> | David Miles / Corinne Onvlee |

Next up

3 February	Liga de Invierno 2	Pollensa
17 February	Liga de Invierno 3	Pollensa

Hope to see you there!

We've published the first part of the 2018 calendar on our website
<http://flyingfifteen.mallorcaservice.de> and also Facebook @f15spain.