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Regatta reports

A lot of sailing this month, two regattas, two passage races and a practice weekend to fill the gap.

Trofeo Sponsor (July 20)

As mentioned last month, Simon Relph joined the pack for this three-race regatta, sailed on Olympic and windward leeward courses. Sailing Fuego Fatuo with co-owner Stephen Babbage crewing, he quickly came to terms with the complexities of a fifteen, taking two second places before winning the final windward leeward race.

Scott Walker & Andrew Harvey sailed ffil good to two firsts and a second, giving them the series by one point. Third was tightly fought between Michael Beecken & Steve Parry (DragonFly) and John Walker crewed by Alex Babbage sailing Extra Sensory Perception – loaned by Michael Clough for the day. Again the difference was small, with Dragonfly ahead by only one point.

Trofeo Cormoran (August 4)

A total of 19 boats – cruisers and flying fifteens, competed for the trophy, sailed over a 20 mile course around a single buoy in front of the Aucanada lighthouse. Winds were light, and the cruisers soon began to catch up with the flying fifteens, who had started separately five minutes earlier. Favoured side of the course was the southern edge of the bay, with close tacking up the coast to catch the shifts.

Punta Sabater had a concertina effect on the fleet, as they bunched up in the shifting winds. Once around, it was a race to the buoy in the light winds. The wind filled in for the return leg, with much spinnaker work from all the boats.

The Harris brothers took victory, in four hours and one minute.

Practice weekend

Our practice training was very good. Four boats joined the session of six short races, and we laid a short course which we had to move a few times because of the 90° shifting winds. The result was hard and close racing between Scott & Andrew in ffil good and Steve & Michael in DragonFly, who finally came put on top with four 1st places. Third was Heaven Sent, improving from race to race, with a very active Sue Foreman at the tiller and Alan as crew.

To close the small gap between us, we plan another training session, in which we will mix the crews, so that we all can learn from each other.

Michael Clough Trophy (August 17)

Michael donated the trophy, and as such sets the rules for race day, including courses, scoring and boat & crew requirements. This year, spinnakers were banned, and the courses would be windward leeward "sausages". Six races were sailed, the first four of two sausages, and the last pair of only one, giving a real premium to a good start. After the first race, the course was shortened, to give about a seven-minute beat, and around thirty minutes per race. This combination gave us some of the closest racing for a long time, with many finishes of three or four boats covered by ten seconds, and gaps the length of half a foredeck.

Scott & Andrew dominated the first three races, with second places being taken by Michael Clough himself, Simon & Sebastian – sailing Michael Cloughs other boat, Extra Sensory Perception, and Stephen & John respectively. Race four saw Simon & Sebastian winning, followed by ffil good. The fifth race was the first of the one lap races, and the boats were close all the way to the top mark. ffil good snatched the lead, tacking into a gap in front of ESP. Dragonfly suffered a moments hesitation, causing them to collide with ESP, which unfortunately took both boats out of the race.

ffil good went on to win, followed by David & Francois in Stormtrooper. Fuego Fatuo secured a victory in the final race, with the first three boats finishing neck and neck.

Unbeknown to the crews, scoring was to be "adjusted" by our race sponsor, with each even numbered race having points awarded in reverse, 9 for first and 1 for last! Even with this handicap, series winners were Scott & Andy, with Tim Aisher & Sarah second, and Michael & Steve third. Top three over the water were ffil good 1,1,1,2,1,2; ESP 3,2,4,1,RET,DNC and Fuego Fatuo 5,5,2,4,3,1.

Conde de Barcelona feeder race (August 18)

Six boats gathered for the long sail from Puerto Pollessa to Puerto Alcudia, in preparation for the following week's Conde de Barcelona regatta. Fuego Fatuo tried an unusual start, diving in from upwind of the line, but unfortunately not fully clearing it before heading outwards. Their resultant individual recall had them starting last, heading across the bay in pursuit of DragonFly, taking Michael & Steve into an early lead, and followed by José and Eduardo. The rest of the fleet headed for the north shore, and picked up a good breeze. Once they had tacked out we all ended up on the far shore, picking up shifts along the coast. This was a tactic that DragonFly had planned, having sailed the Cormoran a few weeks earlier.

Stormtrooper and ffil good closed the gap and all three were together coming around Punta Sabater. David and Scott both chose to stay close to the cliffs, and suffered by losing the stronger breeze offshore, allowing Fuego Fatuo to close up as they approached Cabo de Minorca. Less than a hundred metres separated the four as they Aucasada island, with less than two miles to the finish. Coming in to the harbour, ffil good delayed their gybe, and dropped a place. Final result was DragonFly, Stormtrooper, Fuego Fatuo and ffil good all within a minute, followed by Heaven Sent and then José and Eduardo just as the thunderstorm hit. All boats now moored in Puerto Alcudia, waiting for next weekend.

Upcoming regattas:

August 21-25

Conde de Barcelona (racing with the classics!)

September 14-15

Trofeo Australia

October 4-6

Campeonato de Baleares