

## RYA Press Release

05 October 2011



Mark Y/Kelvin/Tom Phipps - Rob/James French/Bradley - Toby/Mark Lees/Peter Credit: Jessica Mapplebeck/RYA

### Youth Match Racing champions crowned at WPNSA

The RYA's Youth National Match Racing Championship titles were decided this weekend (1/2 October) as James French and his young crew of Robert Southwell and Bradley McNaughlin triumphed out on the waters of the Weymouth and Portland National Sailing Academy as they claimed both the U25 and U20 National Match Racing titles.

The 19-year-old French, who competed this year with two of the youngest crew members, both 16, won the 2010 U20 Match Racing title last year and has gone one step better this year as he added the U25 title to the trophy cabinet. With a very exciting round robin completed on the Saturday (1 October), there was only a single semi-final flight on the Sunday (2 October) deciding the Championship titles due to very light shifty winds of around five knots.

French, who comes from Gurnard Yacht Club and who was returning to the event for a third year running after winning selection for Governor's Cup last year, commented: "The weekend down in Weymouth went really well, we were delighted to walk away with both the U20 and U25 titles. Having won the U20 title last year, our main aim was to try and defend it again this time around which we did. To win the U25 title as well was just an added bonus and an excellent achievement for such a young crew."

“There was just enough wind on the Saturday for some good Match Racing to take place. With around eight knots we were able to race well and complete the round robin where we finished third having lost two races to Mark Lees and Kate Macgregor. The level of competition was tough with a very high standard of Match Racing on display; we would have liked to have finished higher than third but the level of competition was really strong. We also had one new person on the boat so it took some time to get into the swing of things.”

With 21 races completed on the Saturday in the round robin, the wind, which was inconsistent and a maximum of five knots, only allowed for one semi-final to take place on the Sunday which French and his crew dominated.

“We had an excellent performance in the semi-finals on the Sunday; we really upped our game from the round robin which was needed as we weren’t really on top form. We were up against Kate Macgregor and her crew who finished second in the round robin on the Saturday, it was a tough semi-final but we were delighted to win as it meant we won the overall event and both titles.”

By winning the weekend regatta, French and his crew secured a place in the RYA National Match Racing Series Grand Final on 18-20 November at Queen Mary Sailing Club.

“Between now and the finals in November there is a lot which needs to be done in order to improve our performance. We have an event in Sweden this weekend (8-9 October) which will be a great chance to race against international competitors and to learn a great deal for the finals. After the event in Sweden we will be training hard in the UK and working on certain aspects including our general boat speed which needs a lot of improvement.”

The British Keelboat Academy sailor concluded: “We are really looking forward to the finals at the Queen Mary Sailing Club where we will have the opportunity to race against some of the best match racers in the country. Hopefully we will be as prepared as we can be and be able to compete against a lot of the older teams at the event. Having competed in the Governor’s Cup, I hope my experience will pay dividends and we can get a good result come November. ”

Due to only one semi-final being raced at WPNSA, the RYA has invited the top four teams from this event to the RYA Match Racing Finals on 18-20 November 2011. Joining James French will be Tom Phipps, Mark Lees and Kate Macgregor who will all be vying for Championships honours at the Queen Mary Sailing Club.

#### **2011 RYA Youth Match Racing Championships results:**

- 1) James French
- 2) Tom Phipps
- 3) Mark Lees
- 4) Kate Macgregor
- 5) Stevie Tiernan
- 6) Toby Mumford
- 7) Arthur Romano

For further information visit [www.rya.org.uk/racing](http://www.rya.org.uk/racing) and follow the links to ‘Keelboat Match Racing’.

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