



RYA Press Release

28 October 2011

Pearson books place in the RYA National Match Racing Series grand final

Sam Pearson and his crew (Thomas Dawson/Tristan Jaques/Dan Gohl) made the most of some glorious sailing conditions this weekend (22-23 October) as the veteran match racer clinched the RYA National Match Racing Qualifier 1 title in thrilling fashion at Queen Mary Sailing Club.

In near perfect match racing conditions of a steady eight knots on the Saturday, increasing on the Sunday to a testing 16-18 knots for the deciding battles, the 24-year-old skipper from Poole demonstrated his match racing experience over the course of the weekend to book his spot in the Series grand final next month (18-20 November), which is to be held at the same venue, Queen Mary Sailing Club.

Following an extremely close RYA Youth Qualifier event last month, eight teams went head to head across the two days of match racing this weekend in West London, with conditions allowing for the full complement of races to take place from the round-robin to the finals. From the start it was quickly apparent that skippers Sam Pearson and Mason Woodworth were the ones to beat on board the J80 keelboats. Ali Hall also put up a dominant display which added to the intense battles at this eagerly anticipated RYA match racing event.

Woodworth's American team were in fine form in the round robin stages winning all seven of their races compared to that of Pearson and his crew who finished second with six wins out of seven. Ali Hall finished in third while Matt Greenfield pinched the last semi-final place with four race wins under his belt to finish the round robin in fourth.

The semi-finals were heavily contested but fairly straight forward with the top two teams from the round robin stages continuing their dominance by securing their place in the weekend final for the chance to win a spot in the RYA National Match Racing Series grand final in November (18-20 November, QMSC).

The final was fiercely contested on Sunday with gusts of up to 18 knots adding to an exhilarating climax. Leg one was extremely tight between Poole's Pearson and Woodworth, however Pearson's experience from last year's Series final was evident as their boat speed and crewing upon the J80 keelboat was far superior to that of Woodworth resulting in event glory.

Pearson commented: "Our goal was to reach the finals and to use the weekend as a chance to regroup and train as TeamWightMatch following our bowman Dan's absence from the Bermuda Gold Cup. It's great to win but our main aim was getting into the finals so we are looking ahead to that now. The semi-finals were very tough and a real challenge after going one nil down to Ali Hall. Having to win our next two matches against him to get through to the finals was key to our overall victory.

"The weekend provided some great sailing conditions as well as some tough competition. Overall the standard was good and we're really looking forward to stepping it up a level for the finals in November.

“Our main aim as always is to win it,” said the 24-year-old Pearson. “But also as always keep learning and developing the skills we have already gained and to continue our rise up the ISAF match racing rankings”.

The RYA National Match Racing Series Final will take place at Queen Mary Sailing Club on 18-20 November. Pearson will join skippers Robbie Allam, James French, Lucy Macgregor, Nick Cherry, Rob Gullan, Mark Campbell-James, Tom Phipps and Charlotte Lawrence.

2011 RYA National Match Racing Qualifier 1 (QMSC) results:

- 1) Sam Pearson
- 2) Mason Woodworth
- 3) Ali Hall
- 4) Matt Greenfield
- 5) Bleddyn Mon
- 6) William Goldsmith
- 7) Alain Renaud
- 8) Vicki Sheen

For further information on this event and for the RYA National Match Racing Series Final visit www.rya.org.uk/racing and follow the links to ‘Keelboat Match Racing’.

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