



RYA Press Release

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Luke Patience & Stu Bithell at Perth 2011 © Richard Langdon

Three race wins see Patience-Bithell on top

Britain's sailors revelled in the improved Perth conditions on Wednesday (7 December) with a stellar day for Luke Patience and Stuart Bithell moving them into pole position in the 470 men's fleet.

After a day confined to shore due to electrical storms on Tuesday, not even reported shark sightings in Fremantle's Fishing Boat Harbour on Tuesday night could hold back Skandia Team GBR's World Championship contenders as they returned to action on Wednesday.

Patience and Bithell, the 2009 World Championship silver medallists, were firmly in the driving seat in the 470 men's double-handed division, comfortably winning all three of their blue fleet races in the perfect sea breeze conditions to take over the top spot of the leaderboard, albeit tied on points with Australia's defending World Champions Mathew Belcher and Malcolm Page.

"Yesterday was a bit frustrating sat ashore with the thunderstorms and they rescheduled three races today, so we knew it was going to be a long day [today]," said Bithell.

"We went out there, did our best, stuck to our roles and routines and managed to get three bullets so you can't ask for more really."

With five races down and the start of finals series racing on Thursday, the 25-year-old Bithell is looking forward to the step up in competition as they take to the racecourse with all their major rivals, including the Australian pair for the first time this regatta.

“World number ones, Olympic Champions, World Champions – there’s no doubt that any conditions they’re going to be good in, especially on home waters,” he admitted.

“But we’re up for a challenge, we’re happy to take it to them. We’ve not actually raced them yet – it’ll be interesting to race them tomorrow in the finals series and see how we get on.

“You want to be going into gold fleet racing, hard racing, with a solid set of results and so far we’ve done that. Gold fleet racing is harder and we’ll see how we get on with that. We’re happy, we’re confident, our boat speed is good and we’re looking forward to it.”

Results of 1,3,2 from her three races today sees Bryony Shaw well in touch of the Israeli leader Lee Korsitz who’s just three points ahead of the Beijing bronze medallist after five races, while Giles Scott is currently the top British sailor in a closely-fought Finn fleet.

The 24-year-old European Champion is in second place, just one point behind the Netherlands’ Pieter Jan Postma, who took the overall lead once the worst result discard came in after five races.

“I was really pleased with today – with two firsts and a second I couldn’t really have asked for much more,” he said. “I suppose I could have made it three bullets but I’ll settle for a 1,1,2 – I think it was the best day of the fleet, which is nice and puts a bit of pressure on the leaders.”

Ben Ainslie also remains firmly in the hunt for a sixth Finn Gold Cup title, just one point behind Scott in third overall with three third places for the day.

Laser Radial sailor Alison Young made big gains in the breeze today, picking up a 2,4,1 for her efforts to boost her up into fourth place overall, while a capsized for Charlotte Dobson hampered her chances of an otherwise equally impressive day, having picked up a win and a third in her first two races. She’s in 19th overall.

Lucy Macgregor, Annie Lush and Kate Macgregor were back in action in the women’s match racing event today. The defending World Champions won three of their four matches, beating Croatian, Peruvian and American opposition, but narrowly missed out on a fourth at the hands of the Dutch crew skippered by Mandy Mulder

The match racing girls will have a layday on Thursday, but the 470 Men, Laser Radial, Finn and RS:X Women’s classes will return to action for the first day of gold fleet racing.

For the latest news and information from the Skandia Team GBR British Sailing Team at the Perth Worlds visit www.skandiateamgbr.com or follow us on Twitter (@SkandiaTeamGBR).

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