

The John Merricks Tiger Trophy

Rutland Sailing Club

1/2 February 2003

By Nick Martin

The first weekend of February is the Tiger Trophy at Rutland. Put it in your diary for next year. Forty six 420s joined 120 other boats, mostly trapeze boats and asymetrics for this years event and had a wonderful weekend. The event which contributes to the John Merricks trust has three handicap races on Saturday and a non discardable 2 hour pursuit race on Sunday. And most importantly a full dress dinner at the Victoria Hall in Oakham on Saturday evening. It would not be acceptable to win a prize at the meeting and not have been to the party.

The weather on Saturday looked awful, especially if you came from the deep snow of East Coast, but by the time racing got going the sun was shining, the wind had settled to a nice force 3-4 from the west and the temperature was up to 6 degrees. Sunday started with a force 3 but quickly built to give a long and very hard race. The 420s sailed in their usual style with Sam Carter and Paul Davies putting in some very good results for 6th. overall. Ben Ainsworth and Tom Heywood sailed well as the wind got up to finish 12th with Nick Cherry and Joe Henry chasing them in 13th. Alison Martin and Bethan Carden survived a couple of capsizes to finish 24 and take the Ladies' Tiger.

The fleet was divided into fast and slow with the 420 nearly the fastest of the slow handicap. Somehow the courses seemed to favour the asymmetric boats of the fast handicap. In the first race Sam and Paul raced off to a long lead in their start, pursued by Oliver Dix and Philip Lasko, Callum Macdonald and Haakon Kaarlsen, and Luke Patience and Adam Wagner. It took a general recall to get the start going. Competitors should have been beware. The wind was up a bit more for the second race. Again a general recall with a black flag was needed to get the fleet away. This time the same people got clear but were joined by Charlotte Savage and Maia Walsh and Stuart Bithell and Jonathan McGovern. For the third race the wind dropped a little. Alison Martin and Bethan Carden took the start to lead at the first mark but were unable to hold off Luke and Adam who raced to a long lead and a 3rd place overall. Adding this to his 7th and 8th put him just ahead of Sam and Paul with a 7th and 5th

The start of Sunday's race left a lot of sailors confused. Most of the 420 fleet started a minute early. Because they were still over the line at their real start they were general recalled leading to a real start two minutes later. Follow? Lots didn't. When everybody got going Ollie Gray and James Hughes were first to the first mark followed by Alison and Bethan, who hit it, and Charlotte and Maia who didn't. By the time every one finished most had had a swim or two but Sam and Paul held off most of the asymetrics to get a 7th with Ben and Tom 15th and Nick and Joe 16th. Luke and Adam and Ollie and James were in there too, but had failed to get back to the start correctly with the usual costly result..

Steve Irish and Martin Gotrel in an RS800 won with a stunning three firsts on Saturday and a second on Sunday, missing the £1000 prize for four 1st places by only 100 metres.

Overall a great weekend out. With some of the best racing so far this winter.

For full results go to:

http://www.rutlandsc.co.uk/results/020203_Tiger_Trophy.htm