

Carnival Regatta March 2003

Villamoura Portugal

Six teams from the Youth squad loaded their boats onto a trailer at the end of February in the cold of the Oxford Sailing Club car park and sent them off to the Carnival Regatta at Vilamoura in the Algarve, southern Portugal. The boats trundled down by road and the team flew in on 27 February all ready to unload and train for the regatta. Despite some illness scares all made it in time for some light training on Friday and the racing in earnest on Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

The regatta is a multiclass event with four courses. The 420s were one of the biggest classes with 70 boats from Portugal, Spain and the UK. The whole Team sailed well. Callum Macdonald sailing with guest crew Laurie Marsden won overall with Charlotte Savage and Maia Walsh beating Alison Martin and Bethan Carden on the tie break to finish 5th and 6th respectively. Luke Patience and Adam Wagner tied on points with Olly Dix and Philip Lasko for 15th and 16th with Nick Cherry and Joe Henry finding the light weather not too much to their taste in 20th.

The weather was good with warm sunshine complementing a consistent 6-9 knot breeze making summer sailing gear the order of the day. The starting was generally aggressive and in the light breezes failure to get away cleanly was usually punished with a poor result. Two races were sailed on Saturday. Luke and Adam showed well with a 3rd and 4th to be second in the standings overnight. But Callum and Laurie put a bad first race behind them to win the second by nearly 2 minutes.

On Sunday Callum and Laurie had a brilliant day moving into the lead overall with two 1sts and a 2nd. Alison and Bethan also had 3 good races (3,4 and 6) to get to second overall. In race 4 coach Tom Saunt got very excited. The teams excelled finishing 1,2,4,5,6,7. Unfortunately not all was good because Luke and Adam lost their place to a black flag and dropped down the standings.

Monday was Charlotte and Maia's day with a 2nd and 3rd. Callum and Laurie did enough to hold onto their win, but Alison and Bethan slipped back. Olly and Philip improved their standing with a 5th in the final race. Fortunately prize giving was late allowing time to reload the boats for the long trek home.

The trip was hard work for all involved, but it was a good regatta and well worth the effort.