



BRITISH 420 CLASS ASSOCIATION

NB these notes have been prepared following hasty phone calls to some of those sailors who could be contacted this afternoon. There may be mistakes and quotes should be treated as recorded to the best of the author's ability!

420s Team Race at Schrodgers London Boat Show

The new venue for the London Boat Show at Excel in London's Docklands includes a Watersports Arena in the East Hall (just through the windsurfers' area, if you can drag yourself away in time for tomorrow's racing, Tom!). Seems that the 420 volunteers have been hacking it in a strange and different environment.

"TEAM 420" show Princess Royal team racing indoors

James Wade and James Howard ("the one with the hat" and "the one without"...confusing or what!...said the commentator) demonstrated 420 skills in reading the wind and team working by winning their races, 4-3, at the Schrodgers London Boat Show yesterday – in front of HRH the Princess Royal! (James (hat, or no hat?) says he thinks he saw her through the sea of security guards on the landing stage in during Race 3 – and you won that one too!)

James said later: "Really good fun.....glad I did it!they probably need more fans – they were up one long side and then at right angles on one short side.....they had put on the fans for the start area to get over the slow start experienced at the beginning of the week and sorted the middle, but you got a huge header, 25 knots, at the top....quite a challenge to figure out where to go."

Team mate, James Howard (they styled themselves *Team 420*, although sailing Fevas – thanks for them, Joe!) said: "Strange...done nothing like it before....my advice: have a go...fun...worth a try!" [His Dad was rather more fulsome about the Team's achievement....but then Dad's often are! Oops, and the Mums too, of course].

Anyway, good one the James'. Woop, woop for "Team 420"

New 420 Team had set the pace on Sunday

Louis McVeigh and Andy Fielder, former ITCA Team Racers, now teamed up in GBR 51177 (see their head to head with an International 14 at the Bloody Mary in the Photo Gallery), were the "guinea pigs" to test the new facility on Sunday. A watchful bystander praised Andy: "He's got it", when, suddenly, he worked out the way to deal with the 90° change of wind direction toward the bottom, between the two set of fans set at right angles, by reaching both ways. Louis said, this is "good....wind shifty....crazy....not much space to make tactical manoeuvres...".

The wise old men of the Class scratch their heads!

On Monday, it was a big 420 day (another one tomorrow!), when sailors included former 420 sailor, 420 Nationals resident coach and big shot in BUSA, Gimp Holmes, current 420 members Sam Carter and Dave Stead (preparing for their 470 campaign,

following their 3rd place (out of 187!) in their first joint 420 outing at Kiel Week in July) and Ed Males, seasoned 420 crew and helm, as well as aspirant windsurfer dude, currently defending his “biggest afro in the Class” status from a mysterious challenger.

Sam Carter commented (on the record): “...awesome experience....very tricky....took us outside our normal sailing environment....great experience....fun....cool”. Their day was probably before the full racing organisation and umpiring was in place so there was limited formal racing. The wind technology has been tweaked each day since to make improvements to suit the sailing requirements for the different activities (I think some 420 sailors would like to see the fans turned full on – weather like the Clyde in August? – but health & safety a serious consideration....for the boats at least!”).

On Monday, the wind down one side, at right angles across the pond, and then up the pond from the bottom, gave a slow start, some steady sailing, then a sudden change, with 20 knots (others said 25!) at the bottom....”all over the place!...weird stuff!....going upwind hard....first round the top reach....then remembered this was team racing...a mark trap definitely out of the question – if you could stop, you might then have no wind to start again!”

Gimp, who was sailing with Alan Olive (RYA coaching supremo), said they had to learn how to sail in this environment, shallow water, strange wind behaviour etc....”really concentrated on the sailing....found myself a leg ahead of the game”...went back to help his team-mate....and then “found myself a leg behind at the end!”. Commented that the Feva was good in these conditions – easy to grab the boom and pull tack (Mini Js perhaps not so easy here). “Great experience...something different to have to do....really good atmosphere: next to the fans (very loud), with commentary and spectators...cool!” But what a “twat”.... skilled sailor, demonstrating how it should be done to Boat Show audience...and stopped in the middle of the course and could not move!!!

Gimp says that, more to the point, this is a first year with these new, excellent facilities for the London Boat Show....”a really good move for boating....amazing venue”. Adjusting the fans has improved things each day. With experience and further development work, this could become a serious event, better and bolder each year.

Nick Hutton, another former leading 420 sailor and member of the Keelboat Squad, participating in the Match Racing at the Show and helping to adjust the wind at 9.00 am this morning, confirmed the view that this was a good start for the sport. Further improvements would be made, with a plan for the future.

Views about this experience will be very welcome on the Message Board. In the meantime, Jess wants to say a big Thank You to all the 420 and other sailors and supporters (parents, loved ones....) for volunteering to participate. Commiserations to those who could not be included, esp. those for whom there was no water last week!

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