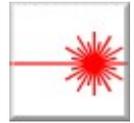


# Laser Masters Autumn Qualifier at Pevensey Bay Sailing Club



by Rob Cage on 8 Sep  
2-3 September 2017

**The penultimate Laser Performance Laser Masters event of year, attracted both the elite and club sailors to battle it out on the fantastic open waters of Pevensey Bay Sailing Club.**

The Laser Masters World Championships, being staged in Croatia later this month, may have been the motivation for some of the best to attend, for the rest of us it was the attraction of the champagne sailing conditions and onshore fun that Pevensey seems to always deliver.

70 boats enjoyed the six scheduled races and all races were completed across the two days in winds continually building from 8 knots in the first race to 18 knots in the final races.

The top 6 in the standard fleet were a tough bunch to split and ultimately no one who finishing outside of this group scored better than 6th place. (with the exception of Neil Peters who had a 4th place binned due to being scored OCS by his own clubs Race Officer).

The Radial fleet was similarly tight with the top 3 clearly at the top of their game

**Day 1** – 8 to 14 knots

**Race 1** – With glorious sunshine and a slowly building sea breeze, the combination of wind and tidal flow seemed to favour the right hand side of the course. In the Standard Fleet Orlando Gledhill made his tactics clear on the water by aiming to be the farthest right hand boat on the course. In the evening's Q&A session he explained his reasoning which proved to be entirely correct, nailing his first



James Gray, first Standard overall and first Apprentice Master in the Laser Masters Qualifier at Pevensey Bay  
© Joel Chadwick



Jon Emmett, First Radial overall and first Apprentice

race win after returning from a season's absence due to a lengthy back injury.

The Radial Fleet saw Apprentice Masters, Jon Emmett and Kiddie Master, Ben Elvin stamp their authority on the fleet straight out of the blocks in the SW breeze, only Australian team leader, Grand Master, Jeff Loosemore could keep them honest with a 3rd.

**Race 2** – More of the same for the Standard Fleet but this time Kiddie Master (under 35) James Gray showed the fleet the way round the course. Alan Davies, famous for his dogged pursuit of overall victory, posted two seconds in the first two races to keep himself in contention. Reigning GGM World Champion Nick Harrison showed good downwind speed to snatch 3rd.

The Race Officer got the Radials away clean in a similar breeze to race 1, again it was Emmett from Elvin, with Apprentice Master Andrew Bryne from local club Hastings, that took the remaining podium slot.

**Race 3** – By now a fresh sea breeze had come in and Pevensey Bay SC race officer Peter White made small change of re-setting the course to accommodate the changing sea breeze direction. In the Standard fleet Gledhill posted another win, having struggled in the second race, with Gray following him home. Tim Law posted his best result of the weekend in 3rd to keep his hopes of a podium position alive.

By the time the Radials started, the tide had begun to change and opened up some tactical options in what was still a moderate 12knts. Loosemore was showing devastating downwind speed to take 2nd from Emmett, with Elvin moving down the podium to 3rd

The fleets returned to the shore to be greeted by the Laser Performance Team handing out free beer (non-alcoholic beverages were also available). We moved quickly to the evening's agenda with a whole heap of prizes donated by event sponsor sailboats.co.uk going to a large number of the fleet, excluding the leaders!

The evening Q&A saw Ben Elvin and Orlando Gledhill take questions from the fleet on tactics, techniques and all things related to how they manage to make their Lasers go so fast. The fleet then carbo-loaded in prep for the next day at a fantastic sponsored BBQ.

## **Day 2** – 12 to 18 knots

Sunday greeted us with a 14 knot onshore breeze and big waves. With the tide under the fleet the black flag don't have to wait long to make its appearance and in the first race of the day taking out four over-enthusiastic Radials.

**Race 4** – Launching on the high tide, the fleet had top surfing conditions all day. James Gray gave a master class in upwind planning and dominated race 4 to take line honours.

In the Radials, Jon won again with Ben 2nd and Andrew Byrne 3rd after Grand Master Rob Cage, suffered a navigational failure in going for the finish a lap early.

**Race 5** – James displayed superior speed in the fresher breeze but the racing was tight in the ensuing pack. Gledhill seemed to have a slight edge over his nearest rivals and by the final race it was clear the battle was for third place, with Gray and Gledhill reasonably comfortable in 1st and 2nd places.

The building wind was not enough to affect the running order in the Radials and it was Jon, Ben and Jeff at the front.

**Race 6** – By Race 6 the tide had changed, opening up the tactical options but the battle for third place overall was fought out between three class heavy weights; Alan Davis, Nick Harrison and Tim Law. Davis hung on to 3rd spot despite finishing just behind both Harrison and Law in the final race.

In the Radials, it was Jon, Ben and Jeff 1,2,3 again in the race and overall

In the Standards, a fourth and four 6th place finishes saw "The Doc" (Stuart Hudson) take sixth spot. He may even have finished higher up the fleet but for a lack of reaching speed.

After a hard day's racing the fleet then had the difficult task of getting ashore through the rollers. The Pevensey Bay SC team were magnificent and the fleet would have suffered significant damage, and maybe a few injuries, without the shore team picking us out of the surf, occasionally with the helm still in the boat!

## Pevensey Bay UK Masters Autumn Champs Sept 2017

It was great to see sailors from as far afield as Blackpool and Salcombe competing at this premier South coast venue. Throughout the fleet there was incredibly tight racing and the old-school triangle sausage course took full advantage of the brilliant waves frequently enjoyed at Pevensey Bay.

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The friendly club atmosphere of Pevensey Bay Sailing Club with on-site camping made for a thoroughly entertaining and enjoyable weekend.

Thanks go to Sailboats.co.uk and Laser Performance for providing cash and spot prizes, free beers on the beach and sponsoring the BBQ on Saturday night.

The Laser Performance sponsored, competitors nominated sailor of the weekend went to Charlie Shearn who won a free coaching session with Olympic Laser sailors, Nick Thompson and Ali Young in Weymouth.

### **Overall Results:** (top six)

#### **Standards**

- 1 James Gray, 1st Apprentice Master (Stokes Bay SC)
- 2 Orlando Gledhill, 1st Master (QMSC)
- 3 Alan Davis, 1st Grand Master (Oxford SC)
- 4 Nick Harrison, 1st Great Grand Master (Stokes Bay SC)
- 5 Tim Law, 2nd Grand Master (Salcombe YC)
- 6 Stuart Hudson, 2nd Master (Keyhaven SC)

#### **Radials**

- 1 Jon Emmett, 1st Apprentice Master (Weirwood SC)
- 2 Ben Elvin, 2nd Apprentice Master (Stokes Bay SC)
- 3 Jeff Loosemore, 1st Grand Master (Australia)
- 4 Andrew Bryne, 3rd Apprentice Master (Hastings SC)
- 5 Rob Cage, 2nd Grand Master (Thames SC)
- 6 David Binding, 1st Great Grand Master (Weirwood SC)

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