

2011 Fred's Big Toephy

Wow, what an event! This was by far the most competitive UK Footy event ever. Everyone enjoyed the extremely close racing which had everything from newcomers in their first Footy open, juniors, dinghy sailors, past champions, old boats, new designs, lots of wind and a race team who handled the event with authority yet gave skippers time for changing battery or rigs etc.

Wind Conditions

The opening event of the 2011 Footy season was organised by Guildford Model Yacht Club at their Abbey Meads Lake near Thorpe Park, Chertsey on 6th February. 11 skippers from 5 clubs enjoyed 18 races in mild weather and a strong wind, which was the biggest influence on the day, blowing about 10 mph, but with wild gusts of up to 20 mph or more, initially parallel to the control bank.

The morning racing

PRO Mark Mortimore set a simple windward/leeward course and to start with there was doubt about which rig to use. 11 year old CJ Vice chose a 400 mm high Swing Rig for his 'ICEscream', whereas his dad Rob and a few others went one size bigger.

CJ got a good start and turned this into the first of his 4 wins, whereas Rob suffered with a bit too much drag on tacking in the flukey gusts and being overpressed offwind in the slamming gusts, but he still finished second with Alan Viney sailing another ICE third. From then on all boats sported the more conservative smaller rig and as a result the racing was very close throughout the fleet. Young CJ continued his winning form, sailing brilliantly to win Races 3 and 4, interrupted only by the Race 2 win of National Champion, Hugh McAdoo, who dominated last season's results with his ICE. European Champion, Rob then became the most consistent skipper winning the next 4 races, including Race 6 where he started 10 seconds late! At lunchtime he had stolen CJ's lead and was 5 points ahead of both CJ and Alan Viney, who were tied with 13 points.

Racing after lunch

After lunch and much discussion about new construction, designs, rigs etc, the wind became more south-westerly blowing over the right shoulder. There were massive slamming westerly gusts giving everybody a problem of selecting the best beating course; whichever tack you were on appeared to be wrong. Roger Stollery, sailing his new SUPABUG design, won Race 9 after trailing 4 ICE boats to the leeward mark. Alan Viney and Hugh McAdoo mastered the new conditions well with Allen winning Race 10, Hugh winning races 11 and 13, only interrupted by CJ's win in Race 12, keeping his hopes alive.

After relatively mediocre results, Rob kept up his challenge, winning races 14 and 16, either side of Allen's win in Race 15. Aware of the closeness at the top Allen kept up the pressure by winning Race 17 from 14 year old Paul Morgan, sailing a borrowed ICE with fellow junior CJ in third. The latter improved again and made certain of his final podium place, with a second in the last race, which was won by Hugh.

The prizegiving

This started with the award of the 2010 Footy Travellers' Trophy traditionally presented at the first event of the following season. Last year's winner Gary Sanderson presented this to David Wilkinson who had competed in the most events last year. On

receiving the beautiful wooden, Fred's Big Toephy, Rob Vice thanked the race team of Mark Mortimore, Gordon Edmondson, John Townsend and Alan Morgan for running a very good event. The Junior prize was presented to CJ Vice who also received the third prize.

The boats

Footys are by far the cheapest way into competitive sailing and the whole fleet of 11 boats cost in the order of £750!

Amazingly, there was not a single rescue required throughout the 18 races. Perhaps this will dispel the idea that these boats cannot sail in strong winds. These little foot long racing boats weigh only about 500 grams and are subject to putting their bows under in very strong gusts. Many are designed with the servo horn going through a deck plate, protected by a greased washer under the horn arm, which some might have thought inadequate, but it obviously works very well.

The ICE is still the design to beat, but the latest BUG, 'SUPABUG' did have similar straight-line speed. David Wilkinson's balanced una rigged IAMBUS was not far behind with five podium finishes. All of Roger's Footy designs were racing, which was interesting as it clearly marked five years of design development. According to Gary Sanderson, who raced BUG 3 in the afternoon and SUPABUG afterwards, "the new SUPABUG is a lot faster and handles well". Peter Jackson had made a moulded version of AWK, similar to ICE during the week before and this was going well towards the end of its first event. 505 dinghy sailor Scott Wallis from Clevedon was sailing a RAZOR 3 and had to cut down his biggest balanced una sail to achieve the right area to prevent broaching on the downwind legs.

The Footy class

It was good for the Footy class to display such competitiveness throughout the fleet with five different winners with the final round results close and juniors doing well. The skippers here hope that the competitiveness that gave so much excitement in this strong wind will be repeated in light airs. This season UK skippers will be asked to voluntarily keep their biggest rig is within the Footy Experimental Rig Template, which allows about 2000 cm² (300 in²) of sail area of any shape and like the Footy measurement box uses no rulers, tapes or calculations!

Results

(place, name, sail number, club, design, score)

1st Rob Vice (41) Clapham 'ICE' 28, 2nd Alan Viney (17) Guildford 'ICE' 34, 3rd CJ Vice 'ICE' (48) Guildford 36, 4th Hugh McAoo (87) Guildford 'ICE' 55, 5th David Wilkinson (46) Cotswold 'IAMBUS' 64, 6th Roger Stollery (117) Guildford 'SUPABUG' 71, 7th Paul Morgan (97) Guildford 'ANT' 85, 8th Peter Jackson (30) Wickstead 'AWK mod' 124, 9th Keith Parrott (31) Frensham Pond 'ICE' 130, 10th Scott Wallis (84) Clevedon 'RAZOR 3' 134, 11th Gary Sanderson (67) 'BUG 3' 160.