

Northern Paddle 2008

by Pete Tyerman

The Northern paddle series had a total of 78 competitors of whom 15 completed the nine races needed to qualify.

Starting early in the season 7 hardy sailors met on a blustery day at Tamworth Paul Burgoine took the day from Ian Bradley. The next meeting at Rotherham saw a field of 12 chase Tom Gillard in two races while a "which way do we go" mix up gave some varied results in the third. Tom stamped his boat speed on the fleet which was maintained in all the meetings he attended. Mark Hill and Nick Lovell took the chasing places. The Welton open proved another windy day with many capsizes and breakages - of the 13 starters only 6 completed all the races. Nick Lovell proved to have the edge from Ian Bradley and Ian Whitfield in these conditions.

Greensforge had a turnout of 7 to open this year in a gusty and variable wind with George Harley and Whitfields father and son fighting it out closely chased by Alan Simmons who managed to finish ahead of all except George in at least one race. The final result Was George, Ian, Matthew and Alan but only a 4 point difference covered them all. South Yorkshire was a win for Nick Lovell followed by Dave Smith and Chris Wright. West Lancashire provided a new meeting on the circuit with 7 boats from the North West and one visitor from the East: Nice to see the development of a NW group of clubs in the streaker stable. Ian Bradley's 3 firsts suggested an easy time but actually he had to work hard for those results, Steve Blackburn and Alan Gillies offering the chase.

The first three races at the Northern Areas held at West Riding SC counted for the paddle and in strong winds 14 sailors started while some others decided to just watch the spectacle. Dave Butler was first to the windward mark closely followed by Steve Cockerill, Tom Gillard and Ian Bradley but choosing the right way soon let Cockerill and Butler get away. After this boat speed allowed Tom to pull back to second. Steve was well ahead in the second race but had not read the course so spent the rest of the race chasing, ending up behind Tom. A breezy third race meant only 5 completed the course, Steve Cockerill gaining his second bullet from Gillard who was closing on him, followed by Bradley, Peter Cogill and Robin Wright. The last race did not affect the final positions Steve sat out the last race pleading fatigue, and the gusty start line saw off all but two competitors, Tom beating Ian to the line.

Another new streaker meeting at Hykeham attracted 14 sailors who competed in light winds. In only one of the races was Tom Gillard challenged by Ian Bradley in others it was a competition for second place between Mike Rimmer, Dave Smith and Ian. At the Ouse light winds again prevailed and the home boats took the advantage - in the first race Nick Lovell won from Ian Bradley followed by Mark Hill. In the second Ian took the lead until he went the wrong way leaving him to fight his way back to 4th. Mark Hill took the race from Nick Lovell and Mike Hanes. The last race was affected by a thundery squall and then no wind. The race was won by Mike Hanes from Nick Lovell and Ian Bradley, leaving Nick as the overall winner. Girton 'ran out of water' so was cancelled. The trek north to Scaling only attracted 5 visitors but started with a nice breeze although by the last race it was failing. In all three races Tom Gillard dominated with Nick Lovell and Alan Gillard looking for second place Alan coming out on top. Pete Tyerman and Zoe Meynell chased but never caught the front three.

Holding their meetings straight after the Nationals may have reduced the turn out at Ripon

and Yeadon. Next to no wind at Ripon made the racing slow and gave some interesting results as choice of course caused some interesting changes in position. Ian Bradley was only really challenged in race 2 when Pete Tyerman got past him at one point. Skilled choice of course from Alan Rattray got him second place in the first race and third behind Ian and Pete overall. Yeadon only attracted one visitor but the predicted no wind may have played its part. Six boats raced and in very light winds John Goodyear took the first race from Dennis Beard (sailing well in his first ever streaker race) and Rob Crossland. John had an easy win in the second race chased by Peter Smith and Denis Webster. John gave the third race a miss and so Peter fought it out with Denis, Rob taking the third place. A new meeting at Elton finished the season as the Pennine open was blown off. Elton attracted 5 visitors but only one ventured across the Pennines despite the fact that Elton is close to many Yorkshire clubs. Fickle winds led to some dramatic position changes in two of the races. David Parkinson won the 2nd and third races to win the day from Peter Tyerman who won the first. Allan Gillies gave stiff competition to finish 3rd from George Evans and Lisa Mullineux. This new meeting now gives the Northern Paddle a bigger presence with possibly two more new opens in the North West next year plus others in Norfolk and Birmingham the streaker Northern paddle is going from strength to strength. Next year the Streaker Class Owners Association hope to add local mini paddles in several areas to encourage more sailors to try an open away from home.

Paddle qualifiers' results:

Helm	Total points
T Gillard	9
I Bradley	11
N Lovell `	11
I Whitfield	25
P Tyerman	26
D Smith	26
M Whitfield	33
P Cogill	46
M Hill	48
R Wallis	51
D Butler	56
P Smith	68
G Nelson	73
M Clack	88
S Abbott	125