

Hayling Island crowned UK National Sailing League Final champions

Champions crowned at first National League Final

Hayling Island Sailing Club won the inaugural UK National Sailing League Final in association with Bainbridge & Seldén at the weekend (16-17 July) beating 10 other teams to be crowned champions and secure a place at the Champions Sailing League Final in Porto Cervo, Sardinia (23-25 September).



The HISC team of Imogen Stanley, Paul Childs, Chris O'Neill and Chris Witty dominated the first day, winning four of their six races held in J70s, showing great consistency given the shifty conditions in Osborne Bay on the Solent.

On Sunday, HISC followed up with another race win and a handful of top three scores to win the event with a race to spare.

Winning helm Stanley said: "Our strategy was just to sail fast and keep out of the way of the other boats, we managed to get some really good starts and just sail away. I had a great team with me from Hayling – Chris O'Neill, Chris Witty and Paul Childs – which meant I could put our boat exactly where I wanted without worrying about the boat handling."

The UK National Sailing League is a new initiative launched in March and run in partnership between the RYA and Royal Thames Yacht Club, with the format of 15 minute umpired races in keelboats.

HISC's mainsheet trimmer Paul Childs enjoyed the format: "It makes the racing really close and really tactical. Any mistake you make you instantly get punished whereas sometimes in a fleet race if you make a few mistakes you can wind it back in, but in this you've got great sailors from around the country really chomping at the bit.

"We do a lot of sprint racing down at Hayling which I think helped us this weekend, we sail in the tide and are used to making those quick decisions."

The second and third placed-boats both qualified for a spot to race in St Petersburg at Act 1 of the Champions Sailing League in August. Sunderland Yacht Club finished second overall securing the first spot, just one point ahead of Port Edgar Yacht Club in third.

Port Edgar won the final race of the day to sneak ahead of Cardiff University who finished their weekend in fourth, and their helm Callum Calder said: "It was great to be up amongst it, we were in the chocolates all the time. At points we were lightning quick and at points we were dog slow but that's the great thing about the short-course racing as you can get back into it so I'm really happy with that.

"The racing is absolutely brilliant, it is so much fun, it's just quick fire really good racing. If you've a bad start because it's so short it gives you the opportunity to get back together.

"I think if we can get the funding together, we really want to go [to St Petersburg] as it will be an awesome opportunity.

"Myself and Calum [Reid] have sailed together for a long time, Ramsay [Leuchars] and I have sailed together on a bigger boat for a long time and Iain [Dick] has jumped into the team over the last couple of years."

Jack Fenwick, RYA Keelboat Development Manager: "The UK National Sailing League has been a great success we ran four qualifying events and the final in Cowes was very competitive. All the feedback from host clubs and sailors has been positive and we are looking forward to developing the league next year."

A full schedule of 22 races was completed over the two day event with eleven teams from around the country competing.

1st – Hayling Island Sailing Club

Imogen Stanley
Paul Childs
Chris O'Neill
Chris Witty

2nd – Sunderland Yacht Club

David Matthews
Michael Matthews
Tom Neilson
Tom Stevenson

3rd – Port Edgar Yacht Club

Callum Calder
Calum Reid
Ramsay Leuchars
Iain Dick