

2009 Footy Championship

A large fleet of tiny lightweight RC FOOTYs from 10 clubs enjoyed a brilliant championship of 15 races at Frensham Pond Sailing Club in a light variable, but gusty westerly breeze. All boats took only seconds to be measured by fitting into the foot by a foot by six inch measurement box. This simple and most inexpensive class attracted skippers from all over the country aged between 8 and 75 and all had a great deal of fun racing them.

PRO Roger Stollery's briefing asked skippers to remember RRS rule 14 and try to avoid collisions, do penalty turns if obliged and most importantly, talk to each other whilst racing in a manner that they would like to be hailed. Note was taken and the wide start line, simple windward leeward course with a leeward gate helped, with very few collisions or raised voices.

The 70metre grass area between dinghy launching ramps provided an ideal control area for the 300 metre long course. The westerly wind parallel to the bank became more south westerly, blowing through the trees during the championship and skippers who were able to make sense of the changes reaped the rewards. Whilst big rigs were the order of the day the gusts of 7 or 8 mph were strong enough to drive bows under briefly and make control offwind tricky.

The racing was dominated by experienced RC sailor Rob Vice sailing (17) a borrowed 2008 'AWK' design, a powerful 500gram 5 plank double chine boat made of Correx stuck together with insulation tape and powered by a simple 550mm high swing rig. He was only beaten on two occasions when he started late after seeing to his children's boats. It was good to see three children taking part and displaying the best of sportsmanship. Most remarkable of Rob's wins was in Race 6 when he started over 2 minutes late and yet was able to sail through the fleet, finally overtaking a sistership 'AWK' (68) sailed by Frensham sailor, David Hawkins at the end of the final run to the line.

In Race 7 Paul Midgley with his own 'GER' single chine design(66) and beautiful double luff film sails took an early lead only to have this whittled away by Richard Alford whose consistency with previous three seconds was rewarded with a win. His 2005 design competition winner, 'Footloose' (3) is a very efficient 5 plank chine boat powered by a relatively small 500mm high swing rig. At the lunch break Rob was leading with Richard second and Frensham sailor Charles Smith third.

Paul Midgley was determined to improve on his second place and in Race 8 made no mistake to win from Southwater Dabbler's Nick Burden's 'HOTFOOT(16) and Cotswold's David Wilkinson's borrowed 'ANT' (34). There were some incredibly close finishes in the afternoon and in Race 9 John Birnie(180), Nick Burden(16), Geoff Sutton(53), Gary Sanderson(13) and young Hayley Vice(118) crossed the line within seconds fighting for 8th place.

Everyone enjoyed the racing and the special 'Frensham' tea. At the prizegiving in the clubhouse competitors thanked the race officials, helpers and the Frensham club's Model Yacht Group for putting on this championship at short notice when the Hampton Court's lake weeded up. As well as the Champion's 'Lost Rock Trophy', a beautiful new 'Colt Foot' trophy for the Junior Champion was initiated by Frensham Pond MYG and made locally by Guildford MYC's top skipper of the 1960s, Fred Shepherd. This was much appreciated by the Junior Champion, Hayley Vice who also won a special prize for

sportsmanship. Her younger brother Lockie aged 8 finished every race, improved with every race with his best result in Race 14 finishing in the top 10.

Results:

(place, name, club, design, score)

1st Rob Vice Guildford 'AWK' 13, 2nd Richard Alford Southwater Dabblers 'FOOTLOOSE' 37, 3rd Charles Smith Frensham Pond 'ANT' 59, 4th David Hawkins Frensham Pond 'AWK' 69, 5th Geoff Sutton Frensham Pond 'BUG 3' 70, 6th Paul Midgley Guildford 'GER' 82, 7th Gordon Edmondson Woking 'AWK' 87, 8th David Wilkinson Cotswold 'IAMBUS' 89, 9th Nick Burden Southwater Dabblers 'HOTFOOT' 102, 10th John Cadenhead Southwater Dabblers 'MICRON' 102, 11th Hayley Vice Guildford 'ANT' 136, 12th Gary Sanderson Colwyn Bay 'MONGOOSE' 137, 13th Bill Letten Hove Lagoon 'MICRON' 158, 14th John Birnie Gloucester 'ZEPHYR' 160, 15th Lawrence Hartley Clevedon '507' 174, 16th Lockie Vice Guildford 'BUG 3' 194, 17th Andy Trewin Clevedon 'K2' 209, 18th Don Videlo Frensham Pond 'BUG 3' 237, 19th Mark Collyer Tri Forces 'ANT' 242.

Junior Champion – Hayley Vice