

DABCHICKS SAIL EAST REGATTA

The first of the season's five Hutton Construction and HCC Insurance International sponsored Sail East Regattas took place on the River Blackwater estuary over the weekend of 15th and 16th May, with the event organised by West Mersea's Dabchicks Sailing Club. 26 yachts from around the region took part, with Saturday's first race sailed in a light breeze, before the strong tide and fickle air in the second race made for extremely testing conditions which favoured the Class Four boats, which started first. The wind then increased to a steady force three for Sunday's race, which blew away hangovers from Saturday evening's traditional party and ceiling walking festivities.

Taking the top two positions in the Regatta were skippers from the home club, each with recently acquired boats. With individual race results of first, third and second, Julian Lord's Impala *Scallywag* came out ahead of Nick Glanvill's J80 *Jalfrezi*, which had race placings of second, twelfth and fourth. Next up was race three winner, the X332 *Blue Beeste* (Martin Jenkins/Charlie Penfold) from Walton & Frinton YC. Typifying the usual closeness of Sail East inshore yacht racing, only two minutes covered the top eight positions in the final race of nearly two hours, and *Blue Beeste* won by just nine seconds from *Scallywag*. Second race winners Jack Grogan and Jessica Gozzett from Dabchicks with their Sonata *The Apprentice* finished fifth overall for the weekend, just behind West Mersea YC's Malcolm Struth with his revamped Prism 28 *Thrust*.

In Class One, *Thrust* beat Crouch YC's *The Geek!* (Ian Langston & Partners) on tie-break, with 2009 Sail East champion David Pinner from Haven Ports YC with his X35 *Kiss* third.

Jalfrezi took top slot in Class Two from *Blue Beeste*, and Dabchicks Cruiser Captain Paul Gosling's J80 *White Lightning* finished third.

Class Three's 2009 Sail East winner, the Jeanneau Sunfast 32 *Amazon* of Tony and Chuffy Merewether from Crouch YC started 2010 where she left off last season by taking the class top slot. Two more local entrants - Sail East Chairman Martin Wiggins and Ed Taylor's Formula 28 *Billy Whizz* and John Clifton's Sigma 33 *Starfall 2* were next up.

Scallywag won Class Four from *The Apprentice* and a second local Sonata, Simon Farren and Marc Purdie's *Camel*.

Sail East now looks forward to the second event of the season, the Felixstowe Regatta on 3rd and 4th July, when two days of sharp racing round windward/leeward courses is promised.