

The Blackwater Gauntlet Trophy

Sonata Match Race Challenge at Dabchicks SC, 2nd & 3rd July 2011



After a year of anticipation, the crew of **Camel** cast down the Gauntlet. On a breathless Saturday morning, five Sonata teams approached the race area. The Race Committee were waiting, monitoring the conditions aboard the new Dabchicks SC committee boat, **Centenary**. The sea-breeze started to fill in, the course was laid and the first Round Robin series began. Each boat racing every other boat, the crews skilfully chased and defended their positions in the pre-start manoeuvres and along the windward, leeward courses, with the umpires tracking their movements to ensure penalties were enforced and discharged. The spectator boats followed the proceedings from a 'safe' distance. At the end of the first day, **Camel** were leading the score board, followed by **The Apprentice**, **Serenity**, **Aubie Too** and **Kehaar**.



On Sunday, again the spectators followed the teams as they sailed out to compete in the second Round Robin, with each boat now entering the race box from the opposite side. The steely faces on some of the helms and the gritted teeth of the crew showed just how determined the teams were to conquer their adversaries. **Camel** had been invincible on day one, but in their first race of the day, they were defeated by **The Apprentice**. After an infringement in the pre-start **Camel** were unable to recover from the time lost in taking their penalty turn. The races proceeded with similar results to the Saturday, until the final flight and potentially deciding results. There were some tense moments during the races between **The Apprentice** and **Serenity**, and **Camel** and **Aubie Too**, which were in motion simultaneously. As each race progressed the positions changed several times, the final results leaving **The Apprentice** and **Camel** tied and requiring a race off.

For the deciding race, **The Apprentice** won the toss of a coin and chose to enter the box from the favoured starboard side. After a dramatic pre-start chase around **Centenary**, both boats crossed the start line with **Camel** having gained the right-hand advantage. **Camel** had a fraction more boatspeed and was able to use this to achieve a close cover on **The Apprentice**, with **The Apprentice** gaining slightly on the downwind legs. However, Team **Camel** maintained their lead throughout and charged across the finish line first.

This year's Sonata National Champions had defended their Match Racing title.



Overall Results

1st **Camel** (8090N) Simon Farren & Marc Purdie

2nd **The Apprentice** (8093N) Jessica Gozzett & Jack Grogan

3rd **Serenity** (8155N) Edward Harrison

4th **Aubie Too** (8922N) Tony Hawkes & Patrick Hill

5th **Kehaar** (8214N) Hamish Shaw-Stewart & David Chadwick

Many thanks to those who made it possible:

The Umpires, Peter Fitt and Alf Bell

Tree Fitt for making the Match Racing flags

Paul Jackson and his Race Committee

and all the teams in Sonatas

Yet again, the teams left wanting more Sonata Match Racing, so next year, watch this space...

Report by

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