

CatSails
2013 International One Metre Ulster Championships
A wild start to Day One

Lough Money, County Down

By Ian Dundas/Brian O'Neill

Earlier today 18 skippers braved horrendous weather to make the starting line up for IOM Ulster Championships and Celtic Challenge Cup from as far afield as Peterhead and Aberdeen in Scotland, Dublin & Howth in Ireland & Lough Erne and Carrickfergus in Ulster.

Flooded roads and an early morning torrential downpour accompanied by gale force gusts, met competitors arriving at Lough Money for the 0915hrs registration and the start of the 2013 IOM Ulster Championships and Celtic Challenge.

Newly formed race team of Wayne Lavery (Race Officer) & Bill Scott (Score Recorder) took the very sensible decision to postpone a planned 10.00hrs first gun for one hour to allow the heavy downpour to pass. In fact at one stage during the postponement all skippers had to be quickly ordered by the race team to shut down all radio gear as thunder and lightning briefly broke out. Just under an hour later glimpses of blue sky began appearing between the murk and proceedings got under way.

The day was not without misfortune for some skippers. Even before the first race had started one boat had sunk with a second breaking a shroud on shore before launching; and throughout the morning quite a few skippers had to improvise repairs just so stay on the water and continue racing. As the morning progressed a second permanent casualty retired with complete radio failure leaving the fleet down to 16 boats with a few limping around the race course.

Breeze came from a SSE direction in the high teens but vicious and unpredictable gusts well into the high thirties dictated the majority of skippers sensibly started on storm rigs, however one or two very brave skippers opted for their No.2 rigs. Initially this proved too much as they just about managed to survive their way round, but as the morning progressed the choice of rig began swinging in their favour as wind strength slowly abated along with the accompanying ferocity of the gusts.

By late morning the fleet followed suit and changed up and as the day progressed all but one of the skippers finished racing on top rigs with racing now merged into one single single fleet.

Top 5 Skipper's Standings after Day One with one discard:

1. Ali Law, Scotland, 10 points
2. Ian Dundas, Scotland, 11 points
3. Steve Taylor, Scotland, 15 points
4. Richard Rowan, Northern Ireland, 22 points
5. Pat Johnston, Scotland, 25 points

The Scottish team are proving to be difficult to catch in the day's strong conditions, but all skippers are looking forward to Day 2 when slightly lighter winds are predicted and this might be enough to swing results in favour of either the Irish or the Ulstermen.

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