

Fireball Under 26 Championship at Blackwater SC



The 'Fireball Under 26 Championship' was held at the Blackwater Sailing Club over the weekend of the 14 & 15th September. Amongst the competitors were Rebecca & Giacomo who flew in from Italy, and Daniel & Harry from Ireland who drove right through the night to compete in Essex.

Saturday saw a river that resembled a mirror as the tide came in, but a short 15 minute postponement allowed the sea breeze to reach the race area and they were off on the first of three scheduled races. Georgia Booth & Tom Kyne came shooting off the line and opened up a comfortable lead at the first mark which they were able to hold and defend despite Isaac Marsh & Ollie Davenport's best efforts to reel them in. Slightly further back from these two boats the fleet split going up the beat, the local boats trying one side of the river and the visitors following the advice they had been given at the briefing. The visitors came out on top with Rebecca Fiore & Giacomo Fiore leading the tightly bunched fleet home in 3rd place.

Race 2 saw the intensity ramp up on the start line, so much so that Georgia, Isaac and Sophie Johnson (our local Feva European champion) were all over the line and didn't want to come back to restart. Georgia and Isaac had a really tight tussle all the way around the course with Isaac just getting the inside berth at the penultimate mark to finish just in front, only to receive a deafening silence as they crossed the line. This handed the victory to Rebecca & Giacomo who were very closely followed by Kane Gooch & Ben Haigh (the youngest in the fleet at only 16 & 15 respectively and have only just moved into Fireballs a couple of weeks earlier).

Race 3 saw Rebecca trying too hard at the start and being OCS, with Georgia and Isaac just being the right side of the line. Again it turned into a real tussle with these two boats with Georgia & Tom getting the better of Isaac & Ollie. There were no mistakes this time at the last mark and Georgia recorded her second win of the series.

An evening with fish and chips, followed by a gin tasting event at the Club saw all the crews mingling and having a great evening together.



Sunday saw a hot sunny day with a North West gradient breeze that became very light and fluky as the sea breeze tried to establish itself. Race 4 saw Georgia & Tom lead the fleet away down the run with Isaac & Ollie snapping at their transom the whole way down the run. Ollie went left up the beat and found himself the wrong side of a major shift which handed Georgia & Tom a comfortable lead. As the wind was starting to get very fickle the Race Officer took the opportunity to shorten the course at the top of the beat as the wind had disappeared further downriver. The Irish brothers Daniel Thompson & Harry Thompson finished in a strong third place.

The course was changed for the final race to keep the fleet in the top part of the river as the sea breeze and gradient wind battle meant there was no wind in the middle of the river at all. Unfortunately the wind swung before the start leading to a start under spinnaker with the local boat of Ben Stewart & Oscar Dyer getting the best hoist and leading the fleet away. After the first mark, Isaac & Ollie took the lead with Georgia & Tom just squeezing ahead of the rest of the fleet. The other seven boats arrived at the bottom mark at the same time and there was much jostling for position. Sophie Johnson & Will Taylor won the battle and came out in third place. On the beat back Georgia & Tom closed up on Isaac & Ollie and eventually overtook them at the end of the beat. Further back there were some real battles going on and on the second beat, whilst in 4th place Rebecca & Giacomo were hit by a huge header that capsized them. They were briefly overtaken by Daniel & Harry, but they were caught out in the tide on the final beat up to the mark and Rebecca was able to regain her place and take 3rd place overall.

Under 26 Champions 2019:- Georgia Booth and Tom Kyne



Under 26 Championship competitors



After five close races the 'Fireball Under 26 Championship' was convincingly won by Georgia Booth and Tom Kyne with four 1st places. It was great to see the very high standard of competition through the fleet and all of us who were slightly over 26 (!) were champing at the bit to go and join them, we were very envious. The Blackwater Sailing Club and UK Fireball Association would like to thank all the competitors for making the effort to come and compete on the River Blackwater and hope the success of the event will bring more boats to compete for the trophy next year.

Overall Results

Rank	Sail No	Club	Helm	Crew	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	Total
1	14940	Hayling	Georgia Booth	Tom Kyne	1	(OCS)	1	1	1	4
2	15151	N/hamton	Isaac Marsh	Ollie Davenport	2	(OCS)	2	2	2	8
3	15155	ASD Pontile	Rebecca Fiore	Giacomo Fiore	3	1	(OCS)	4	4	12
4	15156		Daniel Thompson	Harry Thompson	4	3	3	3	(5)	13
5	14675	Blackwater	Kane Gooch	Ben Haigh	6	2	4	(8)	8	20
6	14882	Blackwater	Sophie Johnson	Will Taylor	7	(OCS)	5	5	3	20
7	14887	Hayling	James Cuxson	Tom Payne	5	4	6	(9)	9	24
8	14805	Blackwater	Hatty Norman	Lloyd Taylor	(8)	5	7	7	7	26
9	14905	Blackwater	Ben Stewart	Oscar Dyer	(DNC)	DNC	DNC	6	6	54