

Fireball International

Rear-Commodore Western Europe – Annual Report.

2020 Season.

2020 will certainly be remembered, from a sailing perspective, as the year in which there were more regatta cancellations than there was actual sailing. In Ireland the domestic sailing season, which would normally have a late April start, didn't really get underway until mid-March, unless you sailed a Laser or another single-hander.

In Dun Laoghaire, club racing was essentially limited to racing inside the harbour in order to rationalise the numbers of race-supporting personnel in terms of mark-laying and rescue. Double-handed crews were allowed to sail on the “bubble” principle – sailing with household members initially and then relaxed to allow well-established partners to sail together. We raced under Level 3 restrictions after the initial lock-down regime and DBSC, the organising authority for racing in Dublin Bay announced an extension to the season into October only for Level 5 (more severe) restriction to come into play before we got to the end of the normal season. This had the effect of undoing the extension into October and brought the curtain down on a very truncated season.

The Irish Fireball fleet managed to sail a full Nationals and a “single-day” provincial regatta. Both events were hosted by the Dun Laoghaire Motor Yacht Club and embraced social distancing. The latter event was sailed as part of the National Yacht Club’s 150th Anniversary Regatta – another victim of the COVID pandemic. The Nationals, which under normal conditions would have doubled up as the Pre-Worlds in Howth attracted 13 boats and was won by Noel Butler & Stephen Oram (15061).

The big loss to the Irish and World fleets of course was the understandable cancellation of the Worlds in Howth. Howth have indicated that they are still very keen to host an Irish-hosted Worlds in 2023, subject to the dredging

In the UK, the fleet didn't even get to sail a Nationals despite a number of attempts to schedule one, after the original fixture was cancelled. Their first regatta of the year was sailed in September with a slightly adverse weather forecast which influenced numbers. However, from a club perspective Fireballs did manage to get some racing in.

I have had no communication from the French, Belgian or Shetland “connections” with respect to their 2020 season.

2021 Season.

Derian Scott has provided a 16-date regatta schedule for the UKFA in response to my request for information for this report. Their proposed season starts off with a Winter Championship in March and extends through the summer to the first weekend in November and their Inland Championship. This includes a Gul-sponsored Nationals in South Caernarvonshire YC in Wales in the first week of August – an event which should provide easy access to the Irish fleet.

2021 Date	Event	Location
13 March	Fireball Winter Championship	King George SC
27 & 28 March	Open Meeting	Staunton Harold SC
1 & 2 May	HISC Open Meeting	Hayling Island SC
22 & 23 May	Brightlingsea SC Open	Brightlingsea SC
29 & 30 May	Graffham GB Challenge	Graffham Water SC
29 & 30 May	Poole Open Meeting	Poole YC
5 & 6 June	WPNSA Open Meeting	Weymouth & Portland NSA
12 & 13 June	Blackwater Open Meeting	Blackwater SC
3 & 4 July	Weymouth Dinghy Regatta	Castle Cove SC
17 & 18 July	Mumbles Open Meeting	Mumbles YC
25 – 30 July	Abersoch Dinghy Week	South Caernarvonshire YC
31 July – 6 Aug	Gul UK National Championship	South Caernarvonshire YC
9 – 13 August	Chichester Harbour Race Week	Hayling Island SC

9 & 10 October	Paignton Open Meeting	Paignton SC
16 & 17 October	Draycote Water Open Meeting	Draycote Water SC
6 & 7 November	Inland National Championship	Chew Valley Lake SC

In Ireland, there is a more modest schedule of dates proposed for 2021;

Date	Event	Venue
17/18 April	Coaching weekend	Dun Laoghaire Motor Yacht Club
May/June	Ulster Provincial Championship	Newtownards Sailing Club, Strangford Lough*
June	Open Championship	Skerries Sailing Club, East Coast
2/3/4 July	Leinster Championship	Dun Laoghaire, as part of the Volvo Regatta
23/24/25 July	National Championship	Venue to be confirmed – likely Dun Laoghaire*
25/26 September	Munster Championships	Killaloe, Lough Derg, (inland venue)
*Subject to confirmation.		
We would also promote the UK Nationals as detailed in the preceding table.		

Both fixture lists are, of course dependent on a return to “normalised living” in the context of COVID-19. The Volvo Regatta which has previously been a Thursday afternoon, Friday, Saturday, Sunday regatta which attracts a 450+ fleet of boats from keelboats to dinghies over the first full weekend of July is changing in 2021 to a two-weekend regatta, with the first weekend dedicated to one-design classes, including Fireballs and the latter to handicap racing for the larger keelboats. This has been in response to COVID and the logistics of hosting everyone over the same weekend.

I have had no communication from the French, Belgian or Shetland “connections” with respect to their 2021 season.

Class Chairmen.

UKFA continues to be led by Derian Scott and in Ireland Neil Cramer will serve another year as Class Chairman.



Cormac Bradley
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