

Swallowing for the Reach Trophy on 4 October

T'was not forecast to be another light wind affair, but was, and matched to a punchy monster spring tide for added spice. A stand at HW -4 enabled us to get to Park where eventually a nice little F2 SW beckoned. That was until a minute before the start when it suddenly went S making for a comprehensively biased pin-end port tack start. Spectre was in pole position but hit the pin then Curlew made her move to the front in slacker tide on the one-sided beat to Ellanore, which however was not without some intensive short tacking and close calls. From Wear there was a return run (the wind now NE!) and the three lead boats were spread across the harbour – Gwaihir to the North, Curlew in the middle and Darter to the South. The latter paid and Darter sailed off into the distance until the wind totally expired nearing Wear the next time and when the race was not shortened there Darter anchored - to be joined by others in due course. Curlew was more patient and determined and Ollie eventually led the very slow-motion group in an effort to get to the Chalkdock Line but all failed and eventually the race was Q flagged in time for us to get back for a late lunch, but not before the delayed confirmation that the second of the two programmed morning b2b's would not go ahead. Many then packed up their boats not expecting that the mirror calm and increasing ebb would give any chance of racing again.

That turned out to be Curlew's undoing because when the PRO beckoned us back out (with several abstentions, not sharing his confidence) Ollie was now upfront and had apparently not re-validated his crewing ticket so only attached the spi at two corners – and they were the wrong ones as well. Hence when it really mattered (when leading around the windward mark) a flapping asymmetric spi was not going to deliver enough to keep Gwaihir at bay. It was a tight course in just a tad more breeze than in the morning – and just as well because we were in close proximity to the other fleets and the race effectively restarted several times as a result. Merlin, consistent as ever, finished 3rd again.

Gwaihir and Curlew finished level on 3 points but Mike's win in the last race gave him the trophy (a picture – it's that time of year).

Results

1st Gwaihir (Mike W, Charles H and Ginny F)

2nd Curlew (Ollie G and Simon S)

3rd Merlin (Mimie C, Julian K and Mark C)

Missing in the action

- The wind, for quite a few weekends now
- Darter who seems to be getting into rather too much avoidable trouble of late
- Skua, sunning themselves in Turkey
- The lifeline that a discard gives (and not available for one day, 3 race events)