

# 2016 Layup Race and Final Season Standings

## The Layup Race concludes the 2016 SORC season

The hotly contested Layup Race, Inshore Series Race 8, concluded the 2016 SORC season as well as deciding the overall Inshore Series Champion and the overall SORC Champion for the whole year.

A qualify fleet of 17 boats turned up for the final race of SORC's 2016 season, including Mike Moxley on Malice, one of the original Petit Bateau competitors. With NEly winds forecast, our Race Officer Kirsteen set a challenging course, featuring a short beat to RN&RAFSA, followed by a reach to Horse Elbow, a beat to Winner, a run to Warner, a reach to Outer Spit, followed by another run to Mackley before the final beat - lots of manoeuvres jammed into the 17M. Or at least, that was the plan...

The fleet arrived at Gilkicker to be greeted by a light NWly and change of course to omit the first mark. Just before the class 2 start, the wind died to virtually nothing, leaving the three class 2 boats in danger of being swept over the line on the tide. Fantasea opted to turn and sail away from the line, whilst British Beagle sailed along the line, luffing Oi Oi in the process and hoping that the 'gun' would sound before he hit the beach.

Charles Emmett sailing British Beagle reported "*The virtually non-existent wind meant that the 15 minute head start did not allow us to gain much distance before the top class started. Oi Oi sailed deeper and went for an early spinnaker hoist, with Beagle opting to sail a bit higher to create more apparent wind and Fantasea going well under code zero, leading the class in the early stages. Beagle then hoisted as the wind went deeper after about 1/2 mile and went well until the wind went forward and had to drop to get up to the first mark, arriving a boat length behind Fantasea. After rounding Horse Elbow, Beagle was forced to put in a short hitch to clear the dirty air of the lead boat on the fetch to Winner, which proved to pay off as Fantasea got headed on the approach and was forced to tack to make the mark, allowing Beagle through by a few boat lengths.*"

15 minutes later, class 1 set off in pursuit. Nigel Colley's Fastrak got a great start, with his running spinnaker flying at the shore end of the line, with fellow Sunfast 3600s Ninjod and Game On hot on his heels. Meanwhile, rookie Richard Clarke had got a superb start in Fury, but his lead in the Sunfast 3200 fleet was short lived as Deb Fish's Exocet soon overtook under code zero. Jerry Freeman also got a great start on his J105, Juliette, at the outer end of the line but despite hoisting 'Mr Pink', his running spinnaker, fell back in the lighter winds to the South. Jerry realised this, sailed higher, and was soon vying with Paul Brant on Ninjod for second on the water behind Fastrak.

As the leading class 1 boats approached Horse Elbow, Ninjod and Juliette opted for early spinnaker drops, allowing a grinning Rob Craigie on Bellino and Exocet to overtake, both leaving it to the last minute to furl their code zeros for the leg to Winner. With the wind in the North, Fastrak laid the mark in a single tack, but later boats were less fortunate and had to tack to lay the mark as the wind headed.

The leading class 2 boats were still enjoying a slender lead as Charles reports: "*On the dead run to Warner, Beagle looked good sailing the rhumb line and staying ahead of Fantasea, the top rated boat, who sadly had problems dropping her spinnaker and was forced to retire. The closing pack of 3600's were sailing much higher under asymmetric spinnakers, but as the wind went forward again, with the tide ripping east, this was the right place to be. Beagle was forced into an early drop, ending up sailing on the wind to get up to the mark in the last couple of hundred yards, just caught by Truant and Jester having watched the lead 3600's sail over*"

*the top half way down the run.*" By this time, Fastrak had a healthy lead on the water, with Bellino and Ian Hoddle's Game On neck and neck in their struggle for the overall championship. Juliette, however, was determined to spoil the big boats fun, managing to stay with the larger Sunfast 3600s on the water. Meanwhile, behind the leaders, the smaller symmetric Sunfast 3200s and HODs were struggling for speed in the light airs.

Once round Warner, the fleet came onto a close reach, and Beagle was delighted to overtake Jester to leeward and catch Truant. Meanwhile there was general confusion on the VHF radio as news slowly spread that the course had been shortened to cut out Mackley and proceed straight from Outer Spit to the finish. Fastrak was just minutes from Outer Spit when the announcement was made, but then made the error of missing the buoy, which had recently been moved as part of works to accommodate the new aircraft carriers, losing time in returning to round it correctly. Game On capitalised on Nigel's mistake, taking line honours, just seconds ahead of the slightly lower rated Bellino. Juliette finished just after Fastrak - a cracking performance in the far lower rated boat.

The fleet flew a mix of code zeros and spinnakers on the final leg, with yet more excitement on Beagle: *"With the pole practically on the pulpit, the luff bar-tight and sheeted hard, it was right on the edge, all the way to the finish. One hand on the tiller and the other holding both the spinnaker sheet and main, ready for the inevitable round-up, I held on for dear life, just making it through the line with the 3200's still behind – what a ride!"*

When the results were calculated, Juliette took a well-deserved win, with Game On taking second place, just 1 second ahead of his rival Bellino in third. There were yet more close results further down with just 14 seconds separating Exocet, Jester and Malice! Beagle won class 2, with Paul Reymond's Oi Oi in second.

Bellino's third place was enough to give Rob victory in both the inshore series and the overall SORC championship, pushing Ian in Game On into second place in both series by just half a point (resulting from a dead heat with Ninjod the previous weekend)! Juliette took the final podium place overall in the inshore series, whilst David Cowell's Jester pipped Jerry for third in class 1. Beagle won a clean sweep in class 2, winning the inshore, offshore and overall series, with Fantasea taking second and Oi Oi third in the inshore series.

2016 was a cracking season, marked by incredibly close racing and great competition. Thanks to all involved for making it possible - Nigel as Director of Racing, Simon and Deb as Race Directors for the inshore and offshore series, Rob as Race Director for channel week and the iconic solo Fastnet, Dave and Kirsteen as Race Officers, and Richard as our safety officer. The celebrations for the end of such a splendid season kicked off on Fantasea, shortly after racing, when birthday boy Tony Rowe had the honour of opening the Jeroboam of champagne awarded to SORC following our incredible performance in the Royal Escape race in May, beating the fully crewed boats to take the team prize.