

Gusty winds and low water make sailing difficult at Frostbites

The penultimate day of normal Club Racing at Frostbites this season provided good winds but low water on Sunday. Race Officer Mike Lees assisted by Jill Fisher set a 4 lap downstream course for the first race at 10.50am. The southerly wind made the clubhouse bank a lee shore meaning that almost all of the 7 Norfolks had to launch in the dyke and sail out onto the river, some finishing their rigging on the opposite bank. Unusually Sam Woodcock in B20 "Kelpie" crewed by Karen Armitage made the best start and managed to get around the lower mark to starboard still ahead of the fleet who converged on the mark somewhat in the doldrums provided by the big trees on the south bank. David Mackley in B6 "Lucifer beyond repair" crewed by young Olivia Archer followed and behind them Ray Johnson in B54 "Coot" and crewed by Wendy Bush. The gusty and variable wind proved difficult to handle particularly when approaching the top mark up the cut where the wind went from a beat to a header and then the opposite direction entirely all because of the Whitlingham trees. The beat back past the clubhouse proved very tricky for some particularly in the area of Stephen Ellingham's moored cruiser. After 38 minutes Woodcock came in first, followed a minute and 40 seconds later by Mackley and Johnson 2 minutes later in third. On handicap Woodcock held his time but in second position was Stephen Ellingham sailing B30 "Willa" crewed by Linda Pargeter with Mackley third. After a welcome break the second race started at 12.10pm using the same course but this time 8 boats started close together, a fast reach in front of the clubhouse. Moving quickly across the start line Mackley got away first and built up a good lead. Behind him Tyrrell and Woodcock followed initially some way behind. The wind had abated slightly and passing the clubhouse on one of the downstream legs there was virtually no wind for a while. Ellingham moved into second position for a time but later dropped back. Going upstream towards the top mark Woodcock and Tyrrell pressed Mackley but a neat tack enabled him to pull away again and hold his position down past the clubhouse and after almost 40 minutes took the win. 30 seconds later came Tyrrell in second place and Woodcock finished third a little over a minute later. On handicap Tyrrell was first, Mackley second and in third place was Pat Woodcock in B61 "Echo" crewed by Jan Hubbard.

Next week should be the final series race at the Club before commencing the downriver series of 4 races downstream and back before the final race of the season to Coldham Hall. All will depend on the coronavirus and decisions to be made.