

Derwent: Topper Nationwide..



Matthew + Aimee

Half twelve on Friday afternoon, Matthew and I left school ready for a long 7 hour journey to Derwent Reservoir in Consett Durham. Thankfully we got there early enough to get a spot on the camping field for our motor home and the Butterworth's new caravan. The second Nationwide of the season, with 204 sailors ready to compete, on the biggest Reservoir in the North East. Saturday morning with all sailors rigged and registered ready for the 10:30 briefing given by Charles Glover our Topper Class Chairman. On Saturday the sailing kicked off around 11:30, ready for an 11:55 first fleet start. Matthew and I were both in the yellow fleet and first start for the first 3 races.

. With the Wind guru predicting light winds for the weekend, Saturday came as quite a shock, as it blew up to around 16 knots gusting more than this at times, a lot heavier and colder than everybody expected. Both Matthew AND I had good starts that afternoon on a start line of 102 boats in our flights. Matthew pulling one out of the bag on the first race with a 30th burying me after I made a wrong decision on the 2nd beat and was hung out to dry on the far left hand side of the course when the gain was on the right. Finally cruising over the line with a 50th, luckily that was my discard for the weekend and I was able to learn from that mistake, as we both banged right in the next three races and tacked close up next to shore to get the port lift into and starboard lift away from the headland. An excellent first result for Matthew as it was his first Nationwide. With Matthews best result a 30th and mine a 23rd we were then relieved when the fourth race of the day came to an end and we could retreat back to a warm shower on land. With a good social in the evening, the club provided a quiz night for competitors and families. That night I stood on the result board as 70th and Matthew around 130th, both of us getting a good night sleep ready to better our results in the morning.



Me + Sara J

Unfortunately Sunday was not very promising as it was light winds as Wind guru predicted. After slowly but surely sailing out to the race area for an earlier start, racing was postponed for a short period of time. Poor Matthew was not feeling too well that morning and sailed in after our general recall on the first start. Finally I started in the 2nd flight and was ready to do an inner loop. After I got a good start I was buried on the first beat as I decided to tack up the middle of the course and was stuck in a zone of no wind with others passing me on both sides. After rounding the mark in an embarrassing position of about 10th from last I worked hard to gain back my places. James Patience, one of my fellow Topper Youth Squad members AND I decided to go round different gate marks ready for the second beat, we raced each other back up to the windward mark with me working the right and him the left hand side of the course. With the sailors in front drifting slowly with hardly any wind I decided to foot off and gain some speed close to the land. Luckily I made the right decision and gained at least 40 boats as I rounded the mark 43rd. Thankfully the race officer decided to shorten course at the top reach mark and we paddled and air rowed back in taking at least three quarters of an hour. After reaching the shore sailing had not yet been cancelled for the day and they were debating whether to send us back out for another race. Luckily at around 2 o'clock the AP over A flag went up and the sailing was finished for the Nationwide. With me dropping 7 places and Matthew dropping 18 with 4 races after a discard, we both finished in 77th and 148th position. Derwent was a real family affair and after a successful event, and saying our good byes to our msts both of our families set off back home with 'midged to death' dad itching all the way back to Pwllheli !!