

News from the Sailing Section – March 2010

This month was a busy month for sailing in Muscat with plenty of events:

5 March	Hobie 16 team race & Topper Monthly Mug
11-12 March	Annual RAHRC Regatta
18 March	Optimist Beginner lessons started
19 March	Laser Clinic
25-26 March	4 Points Race

Annual Regatta – A report by Mary McCauley

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single regatta in possession of a good flotilla must be in want of a wind.

With apologies to Jane Austin but while the sea state may have resembled a mirror it certainly did not reflect the agitation of the sailors who had assembled bright and early on 11th March. Ominous senses of dread and déjà vu pervaded the opening of the biggest sailing and beach bash of the year that is the RAHRC Annual Regatta. Thoughts turned to the previous year when the wind's failure virtually becalmed the 2 day event.

The committee members had worked tirelessly to the point of exhaustion to ensure the provision of something for everyone by way of non stop fun and games with competitions in jeu de boules, volleyball, sandcastle building, photography and fancy dress. Local teams performed superbly and won both the beach tournaments. Congratulations to Muscateers A for their impressive victory in volleyball and to Biloon who triumphed in jeu de boules.



Sailing was not forgotten (it is a regatta after all) with races for Toppers, Lasers and Hobie 16s plus a special new optimist event, more on which later.

What remains beyond even their impressive abilities (talents equalled only by their modesty) is control of the wind. Or so it seemed until it began to freshen such that it was possible to start racing by late morning. The light wind conditions which remained throughout meant that there were fewer races than planned. Seamanship would be sorely tested and those who are over fond of the pies would pay the price. The teams managed to complete 4 races each day in Toppers and Hobies and 2 in the Lasers.

There was a single Optimist (oppi) event which was a trial of strength and endurance for the team captains. It started as a dash along the beach by the teams who had to carry their boats to the water start. The little boats coped brilliantly despite being almost overwhelmed by the abnormal size and weight they carried. The spectators thoroughly enjoyed the (suffering) sorry, that's skill displayed by the cramped but valiant skippers as they attempted forward (and backward in some

cases) motion by any means with sail power an optional extra. The Commodore Tony Van Thiel achieved a magnificent victory which left him a tad jaded ('It nearly killed me' was what he actually said but I won't tell). Rob Nieuwenhuis commendable in second place had the Zorbas dancing for joy.

The feedback was resoundingly in favour of retention of the Skippers oppi as a Regatta event. The more sadistic elements in our sailing fraternity even called for a course further inshore so as better to witness the torment.



The topper racing was superbly organised by Jill and Fred Park assisted by David Street. There were 11 team boats on the water and the sailing reflected the continuing improvement in the skill and competitiveness of the young sailors both girls and boys. The racing was hard fought but in the best of spirits and produced a winner in Gijs Van Rijen with John Ambrose in second. Mark Delgado who is only 10 and who was topper racing for the first time deserves special mention.

In the laser category the light winds lessened the thrills and spills elements and going was slow at times but the sailors made a determined show of their skills. In some cases too determined as the Commodore found to his cost. After his bravura performance in the Skippers' oppi event he went all out to show us how it should (not) be done and managed to capsize for his pains and lost the lead. You know what they say about sailing by the lee Tony hey ho!

In spite of their Captain the Surfin Turtles achieved a well deserved victory in this class with the F 16s in second. The tussle between these two teams for every point set the pattern for the overall competition making for a closely fought event and a thrilling finale.

The full sailing programme meant that more than one category was racing simultaneously. Even when the courses closely overlapped such as the Lasers and Hobies on the second day the sailors exhibited excellent boat handling skills and the massed sails provided a colourful spectacle for the beach onlookers and on the water, despite the light wind, the sailors' produced some thrilling sailing in all classes.

This year's hobie event produced several highlights.

The skill of the leading teams showed itself in their ability consistently to overcome their low starting positions. The starting order of a race off the beach is the inverse of the finishing positions of the previous one.

Five boats missed a mark altogether in one race and failed to take the necessary action. This meant they had to suffer the ignominy of disqualification and a mass start in back position in the next race. The smart money held back and made a clean getaway away from the masses of dirty wind which caused all sorts of problems. Everyone got away in the end much to the amusement of the spectators who loved the mayhem.



The Regatta's overall result went literally and metaphorically down to the wire and was decided by a nail biting close final Hobie race.

The all girl boats of the Surfin' Turtles and F 16s helmed respectively by Aly Brandenburg and Victoria Grainger could only be placed by a photo that showed the latter a fraction ahead giving overall victory, by the merest point, to the F 16s.

The awards ceremony was its usual good humoured self and speeches were all worthy of the Alain de Boules memorial prize for brevity. Thanks went to the event organisers and to the OOD team of Stephen Martin and Charlie Love.

The Committee acknowledged the contribution of sponsors Petrofac and Galfar and thanked them for their continued generosity. We were delighted that Duncan Reed of Petrofac was able to attend the Regatta with his wife Jane and to help present the prizes with John Malcolm. Petrofac has been a loyal supporter of our event and it was a pleasure to welcome them.

Hardly had Dave Clark, F 16s Captain, hoisted aloft the overall winner's trophy (we won't mention the wooden spoon, eh Dave) than the music started, everyone got thrown into the sea and it was party time on the beach.

Roll on next year and make a note of the dates 3rd and 4th March 2011.

For more photos & results: <http://rahbc.pdorc.com/Sailing/Sailraces/regatta-2010.htm>

Optimist Lessons

Optimist lessons have started again with new instructors Karienne Querner and David Boeyinga. 13 youngsters started their first adventure on a sailing boat on Thursday March 18th. They will learn the basic principles of rigging and how to safely handle a boat on the water. The wind conditions were favourable so our new sailors could immediately try their out their boats in Ras al Hamra Bay.

