

## **FICKLE WINDS BRING OUT BEST IN YOUNG WINDSURFERS**

Competitive young windsurfers in the region are embarking on a round of events throughout the summer to choose the team that will represent the Eastern Region at the T15 National Finals - the T15 Champions Cup – which takes place in October at Pitsford Lake, Northamptonshire. Last year's top team, Alton Water Wipeouts undoubtedly have a tussle on their hands this year with newly emerging Stanborough Stormers doing just that – storming into the lead.

The first of four events across the region, at Stanborough Lakes, Welwyn Garden City, was a definite win for the home team, and it wasn't just home advantage that gave them the win. Only formed two seasons ago the team has recently raised over £30,000 for a new trailer containing board racks, secure storage and on-board changing room, plus a fleet of ten Techno windsurf boards with a variety of rigs.

Conditions at Stanborough proved a good test of skills. The breeze started as a fickle whisper running down the length of the lake from the North then, as it started to fill a little it began hunting its way round the compass. Competitors had to face starts ranging from down wind to headwind and virtually everywhere in between, and a couple of times found that they were on a reach when they should have been tacking that leg.

The RYA's Eastern Region Windsurf Coach and Team 15 Organiser Graham Colam decided in the end to stick with one start line with the 5.8 metre rig boards lapping a box course while the larger 6.8 metre rig group also had to complete a turn round an inner sausage. "They wouldn't have got any races in if we tried to set every start line to suit the wind. I would have been moving every few minutes. It gave several of them some new experiences."

Some of the youngsters clearly revelled in the conditions but others ran into problems especially down wind. Nor were they helped by a group of local fishermen who deliberately cast at them as they passed.

Peterborough based Lakeside Loafers were represented by brothers Ryan (9) and Connor (14) Jones. Ryan was taking part in his first ever T15 event and came second overall in the 3.5 metre rig class. Mum Kari Jones was heard to remark that she wasn't going to produce any more children just to make the team bigger. Peterborough plays host to the next round of the competition in June.

A new star of the future was nine-years old Madoc Miller of Stanborough, who was also sailing in his first event. He scored three firsts and two seconds to gain overall lead in the 3.5 metre rig class. His teammate Alec Goldstone (14) dominated in the 5.8 metre rig class, scoring a straight four firsts; he missed the start of the first race due to shopping commitments. All the Stanborough team were riding new Techno boards.

Last year the competition was dominated by Alton Water Wipeouts but with the loss of their dedicated coach Alan Mason and a number of their senior sailors moving on, their lone representative at Stanborough, Henry Seifert (13) put his winter zone squad

training to good use with four firsts and stressful fourth to take the top 6.8 metre rig class.

Supported by industry leaders Tushingham/Starboard, Windsurf magazine, Boards magazine, Neil Pryde and Boardwise, T15 was set up by the RYA to help make windsurfing more accessible and appealing to youngsters at a grass roots level.

Fun and informal training sessions take place at T15 clubs all over the country for kids up to the age of 15, which are run weekly by specialist RYA coaches. The T15 inter-club championship takes place regionally over the summer adding a competitive edge and race training for those keen to hone their skills. Kit can be borrowed from the clubs and the cost of sessions is kept low.

To get involved with Team15 and locate your nearest local club visit [www.team15.org.uk](http://www.team15.org.uk) or contact the RYA 0845 345 0400.

### Results:

#### 3.5 metre class:

1. Madoc Miller, Stanborough Stormers
2. Ryan Jones, Lakeside Loafers
3. Elisa Bolton, Norwich Force 8

#### 5.8 metre class

1. Alec Goldstone, Stanborough Stormers
2. Chris Wright, Stanborough Stormers
3. Katharine Woods, Stanborough Stormers
4. Rowena Conway, Norwich Force 8
5. Sam Garforth, Norwich Force 8

#### 6.8 metre class:

1. Henry Siefert, Alton Water Wipeouts
2. Harriet Hudspith, Norwich Force 8
3. Lucy Budge, Norwich Force 8
4. Jamie Earl, Stanborough Stormers
5. Harriet Fry, Norwich Force 8
6. Connor Jones, Lakeside Loafers.



*Connor Jones in action in the 5.8 metre rig class. His younger brother Ryan came a creditable second in the 3.5 metre beginners class*



*Harriet Hudspith crossing the line to claim second place overall in the 6.8 metre class, for Norwich Force 8*



*Katherine Woods crossing the line to claim third place in the 5.8 metre rig class whilst being chased by Henry Siefert winning the 6.8 metre class*



*As the 5.8 metre fleet turns at the top mark with the 6.8's starting their inner sausage, the angles of the sails look like butterfly wings*