

STEVE FOLLOWS IN HERO'S WAKE

Steve Curtis (11), who is a junior member of Paxton Lakes Sailing Club, Little Paxton, near St Neots, Cambs, was presented with his prize for winning his class in the national final of the Honda RYA Youth RIB Championship, by Andrew Norton, Motor Cruising Projects Manager of the Royal Yachting Association (RYA), on November 1.

Steve won the 8–13 age group by beating off strong competition from youngsters from all over England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. In May he won the regional final held at Paxton and has spent two evenings a week plus weekends honing his skills under the watchful eye of instructor Dave Rothwell.



Steve Curtis and his instructor Dave Rothwell.

“Steve is a natural. He’s so totally at home in a boat it’s remarkable. He’s a very quick learner and has worked very hard all summer at achieving a really high standard; in fact he’d pass his instructor qualification now (minimum age for instructors is 16). We’re all tremendously proud of him and his achievement,” commented Dave.

Not surprisingly perhaps, Steve’s hero is six times world champion and namesake Steve Curtis, in whose wake he is keen to follow.

This is the third year Steven has won the 8 to 13 year age group and represented the region at the national final at Southampton Boat Show. He lives with parents, Adrian and Jo and elder brother and sister David (who is a powerboat instructor) and sister Katrina in Godmanchester near Cambridge.

At the national final at the Southampton Boat Show in September, Aaron Lowther (15) from the Island Sailing Club, Canvey Island, Essex won the senior 13 to 16 age group and will be presented with his prize on Saturday, November 29, at the club. This is the first time both classes have been won by youngsters from the same region.



Steve prepares to take Dave for a spin round Paxton Lake in the boat he won for the club in winning the Honda RYA Youth RIB national final.

The Honda RYA Youth RIB Championship helps youngsters to develop their skills as boat handlers in a safe, controlled environment. Regional events and national finals are their chance to demonstrate just how expert they are. Each competitor has to manoeuvre a 4.5m RIB around a pre-set course that tests his or her skill and control, as well as speed, in the quickest time. To ensure their safety at all times each child is accompanied in the RIB by a competent adult/instructor.

The two class winners of the national event get to keep the boats and equipment for their club, the rig consisting of a Ribcraft 4.8m RIB, complete with 50 hp Honda four-stroke outboard, an Icom console fitted VHF and all mounted on an Indespension road/launch trailer and worth over £15,000.

Honda, Ribcraft, Icom and Indespension sponsor the Honda RYA Youth RIB Championship.

A new programme of heats aimed at getting a greater number of youngsters to take part, as well as a regional final is being planned for next year, 2009. Watch this space for details!



(L to R) Steve West, powerboat instructor, Paxton Lakes SC, Andrew Norton, RYA, Fiona Wylie, vice-Chairman RYA East, Steve Curtis, Dave Rothwell, instructor PLSC, Keith Ellison, RYA and Harry West, Principal, Paxton Lakes SC Training Centre.