

## Waves and wind in Weymouth

Peter Craggs

*As Steve and Jens made their way home from the GP14 Worlds in Mounts Bay, Peter Craggs was heading south to Weymouth to take part in the RS Aero World Championship*

The Aero has only been around for four years and 2018 was their second World Championships. Hosted by the Weymouth & Portland National Sailing Academy (WPNSA), the Aero Worlds was part of the larger RS Games.

All the RS Classes were holding their championships over a three and a bit week period at WPNSA. In total around 900 boats and 1300 people would take part in an event during the course of the RS Games.

### Preparation?

In the run up to the event I'd competed in a few Opens, lack of wind was the general theme. Covenham was pretty much devoid of any air movement, the Rutland Sprints were a bit slow motion and the Yorkshire Dales was light and shifty. One day of the Whitsun Regatta at Hayling Island was very windy but the other light so I didn't feel particularly ready for the Nationals, which were being held at Abersoch in late May. Inevitably this was also a light wind affair with two of the four days lost through lack of wind. It was whilst I was standing on the beach at Abersoch that I commented

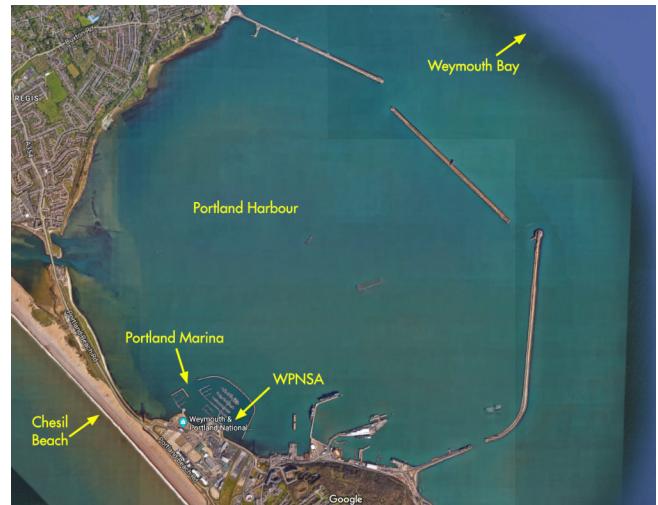
*'Well, I guess we'll be guaranteed a windy Worlds...'*

### Busy venue

Arriving at the World's venue threatened to be interesting, with 200+ RS Aeros arriving along with 160 or so RS Teras just as the Topper Nationals ended (280+ boats). However the WPNSA site is vast and, with a one way system in operation, it all seemed to work.

*"Just sail in a straight line for an hour!"*

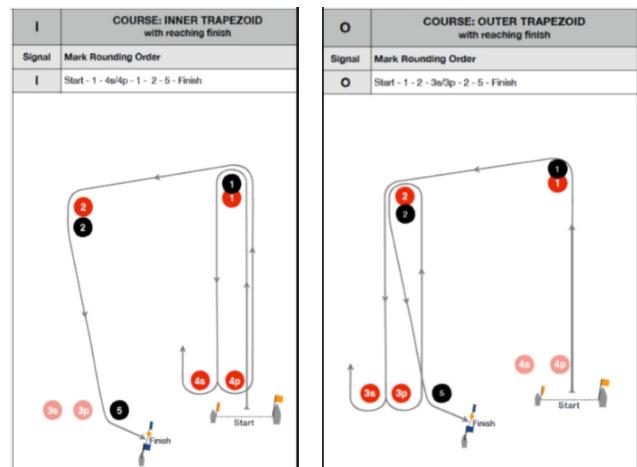
WPNSA is, of course, the venue used for the sailing events during the 2012 Olympics. It's probably unique in that it's still in use as a sailing venue whilst many others across the world simply shut up shop once the five-ring-circus leaves town. It is, perhaps, a bit soulless and is certainly very functional but it does exactly what it's designed to do. And, after Abersoch, I was delighted by the fact there is no sand!



*View of the enormous Portland Harbour showing WPNSA and the marina*  
(photo Courtesy of Google)

### Racing in flights

Racing started on the Monday but everyone needed to register and pass through measurement before then. It was a reasonably painless process for me. I was lucky as I got in early, there was soon quite a queue! Once the paperwork was in order you had time to spare.



*The Aero World Championship courses*



Light wind sailing on the first day but...



... the wind increased as the week progressed (Peter is in 2581)

Monday came round quickly enough and the briefing was followed by the release flag. (You are not permitted to launch until **D** flag is flown). With the course area **W** also on display, it was the long trek out into Weymouth Bay. A baking hot sun was warming things up nicely so with a light, but building, sea breeze it was an easy sail out. Just sail in a straight line for an hour!



Apart from an RS200 Inlands (a

long time ago), this was the first time I'd sailed in an event where the racing would be held using flights. Even when the two hundred Aeros were divided up into their three different rigs (5, 7 and 9) the 7s, (my rig), exceeded the 80 boats limit for one fleet. So we were split into two different groups (Blue and Yellow) and raced in those flights for the day. The flights were reorganised each day, with the idea that each flight contained a mix of abilities. It certainly kept you on

your toes and added to the list of things to remember to check each day. We had three days of qualifying followed by two days of finals where the split would then be Gold & Silver fleets.

### Gentle start but...

Day one was just two races and a reasonably light affair which proved to be a good introduction into the series and understanding the courses and start sequences.

There were four starts (the 5 rigs, two for the 7 rig (Blue and Yellow) and the 9s) with inner and outer loops with red marks for 7s (except the last one!) and black for everyone else. It sounds complex but it all made sense and was really quite straightforward out on the water. (And credit to the person who worked it all out in advance.) You just had to remember to look at the back of the committee boat before your start.

*"...and suddenly I was wondering if the Gold fleet was within reach..."*

Tuesday was an epically long day — eight hours on the water. It started well enough with a pleasant light-wind sail out to a sunny Weymouth Bay, followed by two races in a building breeze. Then it clouded up, got dark and the wind started to play games. **Two hours** later we successfully started the third race!

I felt for the mark-laying boats as the previous attempts to get the race under way involved much mark moving.

The three or so mile sail home seemed many, many miles longer. (It was **always** upwind!).

Wednesday wasn't such a long day on the water at only around six hours! But the weather started to cool off and the wind built to the point that races two and three were in a 'breeze' that was perhaps touching 20knts. This seemed to suit me and suddenly I was wondering if the Gold fleet was within reach...

To be continued

# GP14 Scottish Championship

Jens Kuhn

*And our Scottish lochs series comes full circle as we go back to our first loch — Loch Lomond — which Steve and Jens visited when they took part in the GP14 Scottish Championship*

**Loch Lomond is the biggest, and most easily accessible of all the lochs. I had the chance to sail there as crew on Steve Parry's famous Old Yellow Boat on the first weekend in September.**

We were taking part in the GP14 Scottish Championship, which was part of the Loch Lomond Sailing Club's dinghy weekend. It also involved a gathering for other critters, mainly foiling Waszps and non-foiling, or lowrider, Moths. More about these later.

The weather that weekend was considerably more Scottish than further South, with a fair amount of foggy drizzle and proper odd wind conditions. But that was very much compensated by the venue.

## Excellent venue

Loch Lomond Sailing club is definitely one of the nicest I have been to so far. The club house is spacious. (The changing rooms may not be quite as spacious but they were still not much smaller than what was deemed adequate for three times the number of boats during the GP14 worlds in Mount's Bay).

*"...wasn't the most efficient way of handling things..."*

There was a log fire burning, to keep the chill out (or positively boil you, depending on what your default body temperature is...), and all the members and staff were extremely friendly. Also the prices were amazing — where else would you get a two-course lunch with



*The Old Yellow Boat 'enjoying' the company of a number of Moths*

soup and pizza plus coffee for three quid?).

The race management was competent enough despite the slightly tricky conditions. They did not keep us waiting for too long, even though it perhaps wasn't the most efficient way of handing things to ferry the race committee with a rib between the start boat and the finish yacht between every race...

## Too light for Waszps!

The Saturday racing started with fairly light winds, light enough to keep the foiling boats ashore, but enough for the lowriders to join. Classes were started in sequence with the GP14s starting in third after the fast handicap and Wayfarers, followed by the lowrider Moths. In these winds, the insects weren't actually much faster than the GPs making for a lot of interesting encounters at the marks and crossings. I have to say the Mothies are very polite,

never have I heard anyone saying "Can I have starboard please" before...

Performance-wise, the yellow boat was consistent as usual, staying in close touch with the usual suspects both in front and behind, something that cannot quite be said about the next day, but let's not dwell too much on that.

*"...the Mothies are very polite,"*

After the race and a visit to the hotel of doom (no dwelling on this either), a very nice barbecue was had at the club, followed by a chat in front of the fire, during which a lot was learned about the history of the Moth.

## Scottish weather

The next morning dawned Scottish, with no wind and a light drizzle. This was interesting because the forecast was actually for 10 knots gusting 24. This caused plenty of discussion at the club, with many prominent voices arguing

