

Second 'Catch Me If You Can' Pursuit at Royal Harwich Yacht Club

by Tom Dixon 13 June



The second RHYC 'Catch Me if you Can' pursuit event of 2023 took place on Saturday 10th June. It was a glorious sunny day and of the 18 boats entered 16 came to the start just below Pin Mill on the Orwell.

There were over 60 sailors on board, ranging from former optimist national Champion Chris Mayhew on Meribel (Hanse 311) to several complete novices. Some boats were only two up but many were fully crewed and again the event was being tracked so members could watch on the big screen in the club, albeit one of the event organisers forgot to switch their tracker on!

The event is planned to be three hours for the slowest boat on YTC (locally adjusted) which on the day was Merry J (Achilles 24) and the wind was forecast to be 13-20 knots, so one boat came to the line with a reefed main and only 4 of the fleet opting to fly any sort of downwind sail. However, the wind wasn't as strong at the start which meant a tough beat into the tide. Clambake (Oyster 26) and Kalabash (Rival 36) were early protagonists of staying out of the tide, but the wind started to fill in a bit more for the later starters.



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Clambake started to make excellent progress through the other early starters to take the early lead with Kalabash and then Nushaba (Starlight 35) taking up the early challenge of trying to close. However, by 2.30 Isaly (Dehler 34) and Jameerah (J120) the second last and last starter had joined the main fleet with Clambake still out in front. The two downwind legs in the Stour favoured the spinnakers of Islay and Macdicken as opposed to the asymmetrics of Nushaba and Meribel who having to sail angles didn't close quite as quickly on the goose winged white sailed boats who had the tide with them as they had hoped.

Throughout the event playing the tide was more important than the oscillating wind but as the 4pm finish time approached Jameerah has just passed Clambake to take the lead, with Islay also close to Clambake in a solid third, whereas Nushaba had only just passed Kalabash who were fourth and fifth respectively but still close to Isaly. Most of the rest of the fleet were in sight of each other so the handicappers who had adjusted some of the YTC's had closed the fleet on the day.



Back on the club lawn with the BBQ in full swing Jameerah won the 'I caught them' prize and also the starters special prize, a bar of chocolate, for its multiple timed practice runs to the start, only to arrive half a minute late for its actual start! Meanwhile Sastrugi was best starter of the day and rumour has it that one boat went round rather than through the line.

Epsilon Blue (Oceannis 411) described the day as 'great fun relaxed style racing' while Merry J now has aspirations to win a bar of chocolate at the next event on 15th July.