

17th SMU-RM Western Circuit Sailing Regatta 2014: Severe test on final races at Western Circuit

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BY ASIAN YACHTING MULTIMEDIA



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August 23rd: Dark storm clouds, wind shear half way up the course causing first race to be blown off, heavy rain and constant changes in wind direction and speed, kept the Race Officers on their toes and competitors playing snakes and ladders. Combined with some premature starters, crowded mark rounding's, late spinnaker drops in 15 knot gusts and the drop race coming into play for the IRC classes, saw some big gains and losses on the overall rankings. By persevering with the conditions, a full bout of races were completed and another Western Circuit comes to a successful conclusion.

Bill Bremner's Mills King 40 Foxy Lady 6 and Sarab Singh's Sydney 40 MOD Windsikher staged a match race around the course and Singh's Windsikher managed to take line honours. They traded 1st and 2nd places and Windsikher happily became the first boat to take a win away from Foxy Lady 6. By adding a fifth win to their tally, Bremner's Foxy Lady 6 was home and hosed with the IRC A title, three years in a row and didn't need to contest the final race.

Returning to form and dropping the Race 2 retirement (9 points) and winning the final two races, lifts Singh's Windsikher into second overall. After a slow Race 6, David Dimmock's Dubois 40 Blue Note is relegated to third overall. It's not all about the big boats as Herman Van Den Wall Bake's Esse 850 IMP managed to slip into two 3rd places in the light conditions and an early retirement doesn't improve their standing but gives them some relief in difficult circumstances.

A premature start on the first race today, left overall leader Alexi Lim's Platu 25 SMUmad in 5th place and handing over the lead to Kurt Metzger's Nelson 10 Waka Tere, that moved up from third place and revived their hopes of defending the title. Quick off the start line, Gordon Maxted's Young 840 Shoon Fung Too led the fleet home but a late spinnaker drop temporarily halted their progress and 3rd place saw them closing in on the leaders. At the start of the second race the wind faded and favoured the light weather boats. Lim's SMUmad responded by picking up a win and as Metzger's Waka Tere finished in 5th place, they ended up tied on points for the lead and broken in favour of Lim's SMUmad. The juggling of places resulted in Bryan Chan's Platu 25 SMUVE and Maxted's Shoon Fung Too tied for 3rd place and broken in favour Chan's SMUVE. This is the closest result of all the classes.

After clinching the SMU SB20 International Cup last week, Justin Liu's SSF 8 took their foot off the pedal and scored 9th, 7th and 4th today, to end up down in 2nd overall. After missing out last week, Jeremy Chase's defending champion Glasgow Kiss helmed by Nils Razmilovic, were back in the hunt opening with 3rd place and followed by two wins, brings them back on top of the leader board. With a win, 2nd and 4th places Xu Yuanzhen's Ideals Racing Team comes in from fifth place to slot into 3rd overall, just in front of Jervis Tilly's Tara and Denise Lim's all women crew on SSF 1.

Having virtually wrapped up the Multihull title last week, the Barker Deborah Evaline's usedly acquired Corsair 750 SZ19708AA carried on in fine style, with 1st and 2nd places to seal the deal on their first outing in anger. Fellow Corsair 750 owner, Clive Van Onselend's Dash Boot finished with 2nd and 6th on the long race, to hold onto second overall. Alan Hodges' is still coming to grips with the brand used Raw 30 Kaze 111 and winning the final race gives them confidence at future events. There is no stopping Borstnar Vladimir's Angel from dominating the One-Design J24 class and sailing off with the title with 10 out of 12 wins.

SMU's Victoria Koh's Shengli are still smarting over taking a win from Vladimir's Angel in Race 11 but finished in a distant second place. Sean Lee's crew on Ms Jock, are also proud to ruin Angel's clean sheet and has improved throughout the series but third overall is the best they can muster. After scoring 4th places last week, Keoughan Gerald Curry's CS36 Jen's Jaunt turned the tables on his fellow PY Class competitors, by scoring three first places today, but remains in fourth overall. Overnight leader Desmond Seah's Oslon 911 Arbudhen mixed it up with Dieter Trau's rapidly advancing Jeanneau Sun Fizz Watermelon, to end up tied on 13 points and broken in favour of Seah's Arbudhen. Looking very threatening Tobias Arnold Oceanis 46 Cibeles run finished in despair with the spinnaker stuck up the mast and eventually had to settle on third spot. By winning 3 out of 4 races today, Jeremy Perrier's Viper 16 Bad Influence has eclipsed Lin Josua's Viper 16 for victory in the Beach Catamaran Class. After capsizing and retiring last week Andras Torok's Nacra 20 Red Rocket rebounded by stringing together second places and replaces Tomas Aveston's Viper 16 Tomcat in third overall.

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Summary

It's fantastic to watch the youthful enthusiasm and vigor shown by the Singapore Management University (SMU) students, as they jointly organised, ran and publicised the event with Raffles Marina. Along with Singapore Sailing, they are singularly responsible for the strong growth and reviving interest in keelboat racing. Many of the past and present SMU students have formed their own teams and are crewing onboard at least sixteen boats during the regatta. Reminds me of growing up at the sailing club. Its also a great opportunity to mingle with boat owners and skippers, that are also business leaders in their own fields and racing against quality teams admired for their racing achievements. This extra curricula activity is a wonderful step up into the real world.

Raising urgently needed funds for Sailability Singapore while being entertained by SMU entertainers has become a tradition at the gala prize presentation in the Raffles Ballroom. This year S\$7,583 was raised at the auction and will go a long way towards used boats and improving their everyday needs.