

# **Fireball** E-news

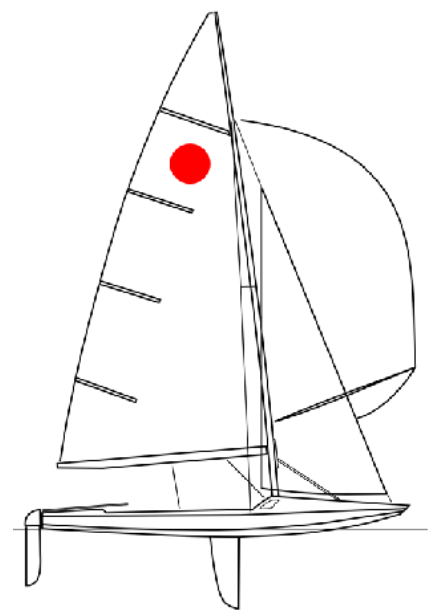
## **Edition #8 October 2019**



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# Chairman's Report

After 3 years of guiding us, promoting the fleet and putting in a huge amount of work, Chris Turner stood down as Chairman. During Chris's time as Chairman, he worked efficiently and brought people on board; tasking people with jobs is always a challenge but he somehow managed to do it! Chris dedicated his time to our fleet for much longer than his reign as Chairman. He gathered and assembled as much historical information on the Class as he could get his hands on and it's there for all to see on the website. If you've not had a look, the chronology is fascinating and I urge you all to take a look. Fortunately for us, Chris has agreed to continue being the class Archivist. On behalf of the UK Fireball fleet, a massive thank you Chris for all you have done for us!

Over to me then. Back in the late 90s I helmed for a former UKFA Chairman, Rachel Keeling. When I told her I'd volunteered for the post she laughed and expressed amazement I'd dodged the Chairman bullet for so long! This is my second stint on the committee - last time I served, it was so much harder to communicate. Committee meetings entailed long drives across the country to the selected member's house; pizza accompanied the meeting followed by a long drive home. Now we do most of our meetings via conference calls, interspersed with emails which makes things much easier! If you look elsewhere in this e-News, you'll learn a bit more about me.

Chris handed over to me at the Dinghy Show in March this year. As ever this was a fun event and we had lots of visitors to the Fireball stand. There were a lot of enquiries about whether the boat was suitable for women and youngsters to sail. We've many women in the fleet both Nationally and Internationally who have proved there are no barriers to competing at the top level, so that was an easy one to answer. As for youth, well at last Year's Worlds in France, there was a lad of around 10 helming for his Dad and they did pretty well! At this year's Nationals we had a 14-year-old crewing for his 17-year-old brother. What's more is they're part of the Irish Fireball Fleet and travelled "overseas" to join us. I'm delighted to say they get on really well and the UK fleet made them really welcome, gave them tips and encouragement and they then repeated their long drive to make the U26 champs last month.

The prizegiving for the overall Golden Dolphin Series was on the first day of the Dinghy Show and we were incredibly privileged that Saskia Clark MBE came to our stand to award the prizes, which were donated by our sponsor, Gul. Gul is in their third year of sponsorship, have just renewed their commitment for a fourth and their support has been fantastic. It's good to remember Gul and the other companies who support our fleet when we look to purchase new kit, insurance, chandlery, etc. There are details of the companies on our website and the discounts they offer UKFA members.

By the time this goes out, we will have completed all the Gul Golden Dolphin Open Meetings, with the Inland Champs still to come. So far, the weather conditions have been challenging, but everyone has had a great time at the events. I look forward to seeing many of you at Draycote!

Derian.





# Worlds 2019

photos by Urs Hardi



Fireball 2019 World Championship

## Pointe Claire Yacht Club, Montreal 25 - 30 August

6 pairings from the UK travelled to Canada for this year's World Championships. Measurement passed without any incident with new international friendships being forged early on as competitors mingled in the boat park and club.

The Worlds was preceded by a 3-day North American Championships which gave sailors and the race team the opportunity to work out the race area. This event was a tightly fought battle, which was being led by Claude and Ruedi Moser from Switzerland at the half way stage. However, Ian Dobson and Richard Wagstaff got to grips with the current and wind patterns and won the event with Claude & Ruedi 2<sup>nd</sup> and Joe Jospe and Tom Egli in 3<sup>rd</sup>. GB's Isaac Marsh and Ollie Davenport came 5<sup>th</sup> with Keith Walker and Nick Rees 6<sup>th</sup>.

We had a day to enjoy the sights before the World Championships began in earnest. Groups of Fireball sailors spent the day bumping in to each other all over the Island of Montreal, admiring the views from Mont Royal, wandering the streets and sampling the culinary delights (can Poutine be classified as a "delight"?).

Throughout the event, PCYC laid on free after-racing nibbles which kept us sustained until the bar opened and evening's entertainment began. The club even laid on a sports masseur, set up in a tent erected by Australia's Ben Schultz!



## Day 1, Races 1 & 2

Despite the forecast of 5 knot easterly winds, the fleet launched in beautiful sunshine under the flight path of the aeroplanes headed for Montreal airport. Crews were even trapezing out to the race area.

After the first recalled start, the wind settled from the east at 6-7 knots, Dobson/Wagstaff (GBR) won the pin, banged left and rounded first just in front of Claude & Ruedi who had gone hard right. Things nearly turned inside out on the run with the Czechs Jan Jedlicka & Jiri Gemperle and Martin Kubovy & Roman Rocek "powering" straight down the run in 5 knots of breeze, but Dobson & Wagstaff just held on and took the first win of the championships from the Czechs, in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, Aussies Heather Macfarlane & Chris Payne in 4<sup>th</sup> and Claude & Ruedi 5<sup>th</sup>.

The wind dropped slightly for race 2 and the fleet got off first time under the Blue Peter. Derian and Andy Scott headed right and rounded in 2<sup>nd</sup> just behind the French team of Ludovic Collin & Remy Thuillier. Claude & Ruedi moved into 2<sup>nd</sup> after the gybe and Heather & Chris into 3<sup>rd</sup>. Back on the beat, Derian and Andy worked their way into the lead and headed off down a nail-biting run. The Swiss stayed slightly higher and just squeezed through in front of the Scotts at the leeward mark to take race 2 with Derian and Andy 2<sup>nd</sup>, Heather & Chris 3<sup>rd</sup> and Dobbo & Waggars 4<sup>th</sup>.

## Day 2, Races 3 & 4

Both races were sailed in light easterly winds that proved challenging for the sailors and the race officials alike. The wind direction meant that the St Laurence River current was pushing boats over the line, making the starts difficult and also making the final running leg of the triangle/sausage course extremely long and tricky.

After three postponements and a few general recalls race 3 got away with the right-hand side paying and Claude & Ruedi leading the charge. They held this lead to take the race with Remy & Ludovic 2nd second, Heather and Chris third and class commodore Christina Haerdi & Cedric Landerer (SUI) fourth.

The second race was still light with some lifting puffs on the left-hand side. Heather & Chris Pyne started at the pin end and shortly found they were able to tack and cross the whole fleet and were never headed. Claude & Ruedi, who were series leader at the time, tried the right-hand side, (which had proved so successful for them the race before) and ended up buried at the first mark. They wriggled their way up to 10th by the finish. A pack of boats tussled it out behind Heather & Chris with Ludovic & Remy taking their second 2nd place and Dobbo and Waggars 3rd.

The consistency of Heather & Chris now mean that they led followed by Ian & Richard, and Remi & Ludovic. In fact, the top five boats were from 5 different countries, bearing out the truly international nature of this event.

## Day 3, Race 5 & 6

After a short delay, race 5 got under way with a new wind direction presenting new challenges but with the same sunny skies and warm water. Large shifts were the order of the day with an unstable 6-12 knots. Dobson and Wagstaff punched out from the middle of the line and on to the first shift to take control of the race, leading from Christina & Cedric. The ever-solid team of Ludovic and Remy rounded out the top 3 with Heather & Chris recovering to finish 4th.

A similar flavour to race 6 unfolded when an early left shift kept moving left to reward the only all-female team of Mianne Erne and Manuela Liechti from Switzerland who rounded first. A lump of weed on Mianne's rudder enabled Derian & Andy to take the lead, which they held for nearly the whole race. Dobson & Wagstaff consolidated into 3rd behind Canadians Debbie Kirkby & Greg Ferguson. The French team once again punched in to the top five with other top runners (Heather & Chris and Claude & Ruedi) deeper in the pack. On the final beat the front six

boats wallowed in the centre of the course chasing large left and right shifts before the hard right came good and allowed boats further down to capitalise. It was Heather & Chris and Claude & Ruedi who popped round the top mark and held on to the finish in front of Dobson & Wagstaff in 3rd, then Derian & Andy in 4th.

The fleet headed into downtown Montreal, tempted by beer vouchers, sliders and poutine. Lay day allowed most teams to take a rest while sheltering from the first rain of the championships. However, the Czechs defied the weather and headed up to Mont Tremblant National Park to "admire the views" through the low cloud.

## Day 4, Races 7 & 8

Race 7 started in 8-10 knots of breeze, which built throughout the race. The first beat was hard to call with boats getting into different shifts and pressures on both sides of the course. It was Claude and Ruedi who rounded first, with Derian & Andy Scott 2nd and Martin Kubovy & Roman Rocek 3rd. The tight first reach was offset by a very broad second reach and the Swiss continued to extend their lead throughout the race. The final run turned very biased towards port tack with Martin & Roman taking second and Dobson & Wagstaff pulling up to third.

Race 8 started in the perfect range of 15-18 knots with plenty of shifts to keep the fleet on its toes. The fleet, led by Ian & Richard, made it up to the top mark and enjoyed two flat-out exhilarating reaches. Ian & Richard extended their lead to take a comfy win, followed by Heather & Chris then Ludovic & Remy.





## Day 5, Races 9 & 10

The fleet awoke to pouring rain but with a forecast for sunshine and wind that did not disappoint. The Championships was wide open with Ian & Richard just 1 point in front of Heather and Chris, and 6 points in front of Claude & Ruedi, but a second drop coming in once race 9 was completed.

Race 9 got away first time in a 15-knot westerly. The wind clocked right on the first beat and Heather & Chris locked into this, rounding in first and blasting off down the broad first reach, never to be caught. Dobson & Wagstaff, who had rounded in second, capsized at the leeward mark and dropped to 6th. They then sailed a spectacular beat rounding the second windward mark in 2nd and holding this to the finish. Ludo & Remy took the 3rd spot, followed by Isaac Marsh & Olly Davenport in 4th. The battle for the title was still on!

The wind continued to build while the race committee set up for the final race. A few teams decided to head for shore, but the majority stayed out to start in 22 knots. Again, right paid and Dobson & Wagstaff had a good lead by the first mark, despite nursing a damaged rudder. All teams chose to 2-sail the 1st reach, fighting gusts of 28 knots. Fireballs were reaching warp speed, bouncing over chaotic waves, and many teams took the opportunity to inspect their slot gaskets!

The 2nd reach was broader and up went the kites. Both Czech teams of Kubovy & Rocek, and Jedlicka & Gemperle were relishing the conditions, but Isaac and Olly turned on their magic to take 2nd place, followed by Martin and Roman in 3rd. The final race win enabled Ian Dobson and Richard Wagstaff take the title of World Champions, with Heather Macfarlane and Chris Payne, who sailed the regatta of their lives, just 4 points behind in second. Remy Thuillier and Ludovic Collin took the 3rd spot, having sailed a fantastically consistent series, discarding a 5th and a 6th.

The evening prize giving was a sumptuous affair, with a sophisticated 5 course meal. Peter Kelly kept proceedings on track in a very entertaining manner, with the Mayor of Pointe Claire and FI Commodore Christina Haerdi awarding the trophies. Several crews' union prizes were presented to worthy recipients, including Urs Haerdi for taking amazing photos from the smallest inflatable boat ever, and Jean Francois Nouel (aka Cantona) for having crewed in the most Fireball World Championships... 23!

Ian Dobson, wearing his new champion's lumberjack shirt, gave an entertaining speech and spoke for the fleet in thanking the organisers, the race officer, Madeleine, and her race team, and the competitors. Thanks also went to John McGuinness and Peter Kelly for entertaining us all week. What a fantastic event!











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IMG 8741 ©Urs Mardi



IMG 8798 ©Urs Mardi



IMG 8785 ©Urs Mardi



IMG 8829 ©Urs Mardi



# Gul U26 Youth Champs

**The Fireball class has seen a resurgence in youth teams competing at major events over the last few years so with the kind help from title sponsor Gul, the youth champs is now back on the calendar. Who's down with the kids? Yes, that's right, we are. Snapchat anyone? Anyone?...**

**The Gul Fireball Under 26 Championship was held at the Blackwater Sailing Club over the weekend of the 14 & 15th September. Amongst the competitors were Rebecca & Giacomo who flew in from Italy, and Daniel & Harry from Ireland who drove right through the night to compete in Essex.**

Saturday saw a river that resembled a mirror as the tide came in, but a short 15 minute postponement allowed the sea breeze to reach the race area and they were off on the first of three scheduled races. Georgia Booth & Tom Kyne came shooting off the line and opened up a comfortable lead at the first mark which they were able to hold and defend despite Isaac Marsh & Ollie Davenport's best efforts to reel them in. Slightly further back from these two boats the fleet split going up the beat, the local boats trying one side of the river and the visitors following the advice they had been given at the briefing. The visitors came out on top with Rebecca & Giacomo Fiore leading the tightly bunched fleet home in 3rd place.

Race 2 saw the intensity ramp up on the start line, so much so that Georgia, Isaac and Sophie Johnson (local European Feva champion) were all over the line and didn't want to come back to restart. Georgia and Isaac had a really tight tussle all the way around the course with Isaac just getting the inside berth at the penultimate mark to finish just in front, only to receive a deafening silence as they crossed the line. This handed the victory to Rebecca & Giacomo who were very closely followed by Kane Gooch & Ben Haigh (the youngest in the fleet at only 16 & 15 respectively, having only just moved into Fireballs a couple of weeks earlier).

Race 3 saw Rebecca trying too hard at the start and being OCS, with Georgia and Isaac just being the right side of the line. Again it turned into a real tussle with these two boats with Georgia & Tom getting the better of Isaac & Ollie. There were no mistakes this time at the last mark and Georgia recorded her second win of the series.

An evening with fish and chips, followed by a gin tasting event at the club (for those over 18 of course) saw all the crews mingling and having a great evening together.

Sunday saw a hot sunny day with a North West gradient breeze that became very light and flukey as the sea breeze tried to establish itself. Race 4 saw Georgia & Tom lead the fleet away down the run with Isaac & Ollie snapping at their transom the whole way down the leg. Ollie went left up the beat and found himself the wrong side of a major shift which handed Georgia & Tom a comfortable lead. As the wind was starting to get very fickle the Race Officer took the opportunity to shorten the course at the top of the beat as the wind had disappeared further downriver. The Irish brothers Daniel Thompson & Harry Thompson finished in a strong third place.

The course was changed for the final race to keep the fleet in the top part of the river as the sea breeze and gradient wind battle meant there was no wind in the middle of the river at all.

Unfortunately the wind swung before the start leading to a start under spinnaker with the local boat of Ben Stewart & Oscar Dyer getting the best hoist and leading the fleet away. After the first mark, Isaac & Ollie took the lead with Georgia & Tom just squeezing ahead of the rest of the fleet. The other seven boats arrived at the bottom mark at the same time and there was much jostling for position. Sophie Johnson & Will Taylor won the battle and came out in third place. On the beat back Georgia & Tom closed up on Isaac & Ollie and eventually overtook them at the end of the beat.

Further back there were some real battles going on and on the second beat, whilst in 4th place, Rebecca & Giacomo were hit by a huge header that capsized them. They were briefly overtaken by Daniel & Harry, but they were caught out in the tide on the final beat up to the mark and Rebecca was able to regain her place and take third place overall.

After five close races the Gul Fireball Under 26 Championship was convincingly won by Georgia Booth & Tom Kyne with four bullets. It was great to see the very high standard of competition through the fleet and all of us who were (slightly) over 26 were champing at the bit to go and join them on the water. The Blackwater Sailing Club and UK Fireball Association would like to thank all the competitors for making the effort to come and compete on the River Blackwater and to title sponsor Gul and hope the success of the event will bring more boats to compete for the trophy next year.



© Russ Lee



©Kate Stewart



© Russ Lee



# Round the Cans

## All about you

A new regular series where we get under the skin of Fireball sailors in an interview fashion. In this edition it's the turn of our new Chairman Derian Scott. So if you'd like to get to know one of the best lady helms around, read on...



**Name:** Derian Scott

**Age:** I'm with Russell on this - it's a state of mind! So twenty-something 😊 ?!

**Profession:** Project Manager

**Home Town:** Bath

**Club:** Chew Valley Lake Sailing Club.

**Boat number and name:** GBR 14941, "Southpaws". It's a bit geeky, but we chose the number because it's 1 squared, 2 squared, 3 squared, 2 squared, 1 squared. The name was chosen because Andy and I are both left-handed. He (yes, Southpaws is a boy) was our wedding present to each other!

**Fireball Buying history:** My first Fireball was 14280 - one of the last narrow-bowed composite Winders. I bought it from Rhiannon Fryer when she emigrated to Australia in 1995. The boat was speedy, but a bit challenging downwind in the waves! Then in 1996 I bought 14598 "Leverage and Cleavage". 14853 "The Hooter Scooter" came along in 2004, followed by Southpaws.



### **Current Nationals Fleet: Gold**

**Gear:** North sails for the last few years, but we're having a go with Hydes this season. We're a reasonably light pairing, and find the Superspar M7+ suits us.

**Which pole system?:** Standard centre slung. We're keen to use a carbon pole assuming they get voted in as allowable, but failing that we may move to the Sayce-Rees pole - both these options will make it easier to push the pole out in heavy winds.

**How long have you been sailing Fireballs:** Since 1994.

**At what level:** Club, national and international

**Year of 1<sup>st</sup> Nationals:** Parkstone Nationals in 1994 sailing with Simon Goldsmith in his boat, 13779. We won the Bronze Fleet and got promoted to the Gold fleet in 1995 after inadvertently finishing the first race in 6th! I've only missed 2 Nationals since then.

**Last major championship:** 2019 Fireball Worlds at Pointe Claire, Canada

**Most memorable result:** It's a close one between the 2009 Worlds when we won race 9 out of 101 boats, and 2015 when we won race 3 from 107 boats. On both occasions I was smiling all day long for weeks! Oh, and back in 1998 when I was sailing with Rachel Keeling (another UKFA Chairman) we won a race at a World qualifier event at Hayling Island. Almost better than the race win was overhearing a couple of older club members in the bar saying, with a mixture of disdain and surprise, "Apparently that race was won by a couple of girls"!





**What other boats have you sailed:** I started crewing for my sister in a Mirror when I was 9. I bought a Hornet with my university sponsorship money in 1986. I tried a Solo, but I don't weigh enough to sail in more than a Force 2! I crewed for Andy (husband & my Fireball crew) in an RS800 a few years ago. I own an RS Aero and occasionally crew in an RS200.

**Why do you sail a Fireball:** I prefer to sail a two-person boat as perfecting teamwork is part of the challenge and means you can share the fun! When I first stepped in the Fireball in 1994, I knew it was the boat for me. I love racing in windy conditions and the Fireball is so lively and rewarding when the breeze is up. Being female and a lightweight (~55Kg) doesn't disadvantage me at all.

**What do you like best about it:** Everything! I love the way it feels upwind and downwind; I love the type of people the class attracts; I love that the boat is easy to set up for different wind conditions and crew weights. The International circuit is great fun: we go to amazing venues and we've made friends all around the World. We're so lucky in the UK to have so many great clubs to race at.

**Who is your crew:** My long-suffering husband Andy! When we first met in 1999, he was a rock climber. In 2001 I introduced him to sailing and he was hooked. The rest is history.

**What does he/she do well:** We work really well together as a team. He does the tactics and has a really great work rate. Every now and again I get a peck on the cheek if we've done well!

**What could he/she do better:** for the sake of my marriage, I'll skip this one!

**How do you prepare for a campaign (boat/fitness):** I go to the gym where I work on core and upper body strength. Cycling helps with endurance and cardio. Yoga and general stretching are really important too, especially as I'm getting on a bit now (maybe I lied about being twenty-something!).

**What event are you most excited about next year:** The Weymouth Nationals. It's my second one as Chairman but I know that Simon Benson and the Club will organise a fantastic event and we're going to have a great time on and off the water. We're also going to the worlds in Ireland which should be amazing.

**What would you like to see in the class:** More Fireballs being raced at club level. When I started racing Fireballs there wasn't the choice of 2-person trapeze boats that there is now and there were many clubs with large Fireball fleets. With so many boats to choose from now we need to work on attracting people into our class who are looking for their next boat. There are a few clubs in the UK who are succeeding at this and it would be great if some of our members can find a way to inspire others to join us. More boats at a local level will hopefully feed into higher numbers at Open Meetings and Championships.

**Sausage sandwich/bacon butty/avocado on toast:** Marmite & avocado on toast (thanks Andy Pearce for introducing me to that)!

**What's your best one liner:** No-one intentionally messes something up - it happened; move on and see what you can do for the rest of the race.

# UKFA Gul Nationals 2019

Photos © Tania Hutchings & Jean Border

**The 2019 GUL UK Fireball Championship took place in beautiful Torbay over 4 days including the late May bank holiday. A healthy entry of 44 boats, including many past World, European and National champions turned up to the RYA club of the year, the newly refurbished Royal Torbay Yacht Club.**

On day one the fleet was greeted by delightful weather, not quite the wind that was forecast but the race team was confident of getting the two planned races sailed.

The fleet launched on time and headed out to the race course ready for the first start. Some found this process trickier than others, as sailing ability out on the course clearly doesn't translate into launching ability, with a previous champion managing to sail into the pontoon in the harbour much to the watching sailors amusement.

**Race 1 got under way in a warm and sunny 5-7 knots.**

Ben Rhodes & Ian Martin rounded the top mark first followed by Ian Dobson & Richard Wagstaff then Christian Birrell & Vyv Townend. The wind dropped off during the second beat, filling in slightly on the left. The eventual race winners were Dobson & Wagstaff.

The race committee took a few attempts to get the second race away which included an abandonment half way up the first beat as the wind continued to track right. Finally settling in the West, the wind built to a shifty 15 knots.

Matt Burge & Dan Schieber rounded the top mark first with the fleet close behind. The wind then slowly dropped off to 10 knots for the second beat with much place changing. Eventual race winners were Burge & Schieber.

Overall a tricky, fun day to kick off the Nationals!

**The forecasts for Day 2 promised excellent sailing with 15 knot westerlies.**

The first race started promisingly with 12-15 knots blowing steadily from a bearing of 250. However, about halfway up the first beat the wind gods started having a laugh and the wind went left and dropped and thereafter the wind was up and down between 8 and 12 knots and coming from anywhere between 220 and 265 for the rest of the day. The resulting conditions were testing,

prompting continuous debates about which way to go.

Those who kept probing the right hand side of the beat just in case the forecast shift came in were generally disappointed and those who sailed the shifts and watched the gusts up the middle invariably came out best in the long run. The race committee did a great job in the circumstances, getting the fleet off on the second start both times under black flag and there was at least one course change in the first race when they tried to follow the wind after it had shifted.

The master of these conditions was Matt Burge & Dan Schieber, who sailed consistently leading from start to finish in both races. Christian Birrell & Vyv Townend put the pressure on themselves by being black flagged in the second race, cementing this as their discard until the final race of the series on Tuesday. These black flags meant that the second best set of results of the day went to Dave Hall & Paul Constable who sailed consistently to return a 3rd and a 4th leaving them in a 3 way tie for 4th place with Dave Wade & Richard Pepperdine and Paul Cullen & Simon Forbes.

**On day 3 a gusty and shifty F3-4 westerly with large holes and some sunshine greeted the fleet as they launched for races 5 and 6.**

There was a short delay as the race committee did a good job to set the course in the challenging and shifty conditions. A black flag set the tone for the day with the race committee keen to get the teams away. The fleet started on the first attempt with Birrell & Townend the only casualty of the black flag, something that could well prove critical by the end of the event.

The wind conditions proved very unpredictable, with big gains to be had for those who managed to be in the right place and able to play the shifts. The result of this was lots of place changing and tight racing throughout the fleet.

The first reach was very tight with some electing to two sail the reach, only hoisting their spinnakers about half way along and a number of Aussie drops were deployed to make the mark.

After three laps, the runaway winners of race 5 were Dobson & Wagstaff in boat 15161.

Race 6 got away on the second attempt with the current leaders Burge & Schieber black flagged along with Kevin Hope & Russell Thorne.



With the wind remaining unpredictable there was a large right hand shift on the first beat, causing some consternation on the left of the fleet and some excitement for everyone else!

Showing their characteristic good form, the winners of race 6 were once again Dobson and Wagstaff, pushing them into the overall lead of the championship.

After a tough day's sailing the fleet was more than ready for the BBQ and the prize draw featuring some amazing prizes including a [Gul](#) wetsuit, Gul drysuit and a Hyde spinnaker.

Heading into the final day, the battle for first place was between Dobson & Wagstaff and Burge & Schieber, separated by only 2 points. Wade & Pepperdine sat in third with only 3 points to fourth place pairing of Hall & Constable.

Further down the standings, the silver fleet was being comfortably led by Jack Grogan & William Sargeant. The leaders of the bronze fleet, Roger Etherington & Dave Pannell were out in front with an impressive 27 point gap to the next bronze fleet boat.



The final day dealt up its most challenging conditions yet for the final 2 races. A North Westerly wind blowing off Torquay and occasionally off Paignton. Not only varying in direction also changing in speed from 5 to 20 knots. It was going to be an interesting final day for the potential champions.

There was a short delay while the race team waited for a window to start the first race of the day. Once the fleet got away it was anybody's guess which side the wind was going to favour and as a result there were boats making huge gains and losses. Wade & Pepperdine led round the first mark closely followed by Martyn Lewis & Richard Byne. In the much changing conditions Lewis & Byne passed Wade & Pepperdine to take the win. Dobson & Wagstaff recovered well to come in third with Burge & Schieber, their nearest challenger, swallowed up in the pack.

So, for the last race it was cat and mouse as Dobson & Wagstaff chased Burge & Schieber around the starting area. The conditions were very similar to the first race of the day with once again much place changing all through the race. Birrell & Townend showed they still had it to put in a solid 2nd place but it was Ian Dobson & Richard Wagstaff who went on to win the race and as a result the Championship.

A big thank you to Royal Torbay YC who ran an excellent event both on and off the water. Also to sponsors [Gul](#), [Hyde Sails](#), North, Global Insurance and to the UKFA committee.

The Gul UK Fireball Nationals 2020 will be another 4 day event at the National Sailing Academy in Weymouth over the 25th to the 28th of July.









# Technical – bow down & send it

By Ian Dobson

A series of articles focussing on the technical aspects of the Fireball. This time round our current National and World Champion Ian Dobson explains the mystical 'fast mode'...

## Bow down and send it!

What does that even mean?!

Often referred to by many in the bar after a big day on the water, but frequently overused, misused or abused. So let's discuss in more detail about generating a fast [and high] mode sailing in a straight line upwind in more than, say, 14knts of wind. For simplicity, let's not focus on wind speeds of more than 22knts.

Firstly, the 'Fast Mode' is about improving velocity made good (VMG) not about reaching off to the cliffs. This comes from constantly playing between height and speed. One of the key aims could be to promote planing, which is what the knife edge terminology alludes to. In reality a Fireball sails in a 'semi-planing mode' and the aim is simply to increase boat speed through the water and reduce displacement drag without giving away too much height. The term "Bow Down" is too coarse a measure, and I would refrain from using it. Instead I like to say 'leaning on the jib' as I feel this communicates the level of subtlety and precision that is required. A measure for this could be instead of sailing with your lowest windward jib telltale lifting at an angle of 20 degrees to the horizontal, perhaps they might be between 10 degrees and horizontal. Generally speaking, a 'horizontal telltale mode' is only used to accelerate the boat, and therefore should only be maintained for a few seconds until a new steady velocity is achieved, from there we need to refocus our efforts on not giving away distance to windward. Do this by pulling the main sheet in, using the leach to arc the boat back upwind. When the boat is really trucking, this arc can be stretched out. We lean on the jib again at the point at which the boat starts to decelerate.

Next, 'leaning on the jib' is actually not high on the priority list. In fact, it is probably quite low down, as it is merely a tool to accelerate the boat. The priority is ALWAYS on sailing the boat flat, sailing the boat precisely and consistently on the wind, and maximising our leverage to enable us to maximise our power conversion (trapezing flat, hiking hard).

Boat set-up is crucial to achieving a flat and stable platform for the helm to achieve the above. The narrow rig base makes the Fireball mast quite bendy. Combined with a large mainsail it is almost impossible to use too much kicker [in breezy conditions, notwithstanding lull response]. Kicker pushes the bow upwind and makes us point higher as well as flattening the mainsail to reduce drag. For information, I cannot physically pull more kicker on upwind in more than 20knts. There probably is a mode to be had by easing the kicker (and strut) but I can't say I have found it. The jib slot should match the mainsail, but often this is controlled by mast rake rather than jib bars, lift the bars to fine tune or if you are caught on the wrong mast rake. Easing the jib to help accelerate the boat is sometimes ok - but note that 10mm out on sheet is the correct sort of range. Do squeeze it back in when the boat is moving fast.



© Nathalie Moreau



What does it feel like? Easy - Like warm apple pie!

A fireball is a lovely boat to sail upwind in breezy conditions. Sailed well, a fireball is able to generate speed and height. Fireballs are fortunate to have an efficient centreboard section, which, once higher water flow velocities are achieved, generates a high lift to drag ratio. Lifting the centreboard increases the chord length and reduces the camber to chord length ratio, which, at higher Reynolds numbers (faster speeds), produces a more efficient section. It also keeps you more steady in a straight line. What does that mean? Once you are going quick, you can also go high. Lifting the C/B also has a second effect - it frees the bow. This is to say that moving the centre or resistance (lift) backwards reduces weather helm (tiller tug) and naturally makes us lean on the jib. This is another reason why you should not [over]actively put the bow down! Lift the C/B too far and you will lose the bow and generate lee helm. Aim for very small amounts of weather helm. Typically the centreboard will go from vertical up to 1-2 inches up as we start to free to bow. Reserve the numbers 3-4 for when its really blowing and never [save for survival] go more than 5 inches up. The fireball really starts to sing when you generate speed and turn it in to height, it becomes easy to sail, the rudder is balanced and light and mainsheet movements become smaller as you use the main leach to generate height. It will practically sail itself!

Key points - Keep the range of steering angles narrow and don't give away too much height. Balance the boat and let it sail the angle - using loads of kicker, sneaking the board up to neutralise the load in the tiller and always sailing flat. Work hard to accelerate the boat, using a short sharp mainsail ease to 'lean on the jib', use the main leach to drive the height again and then chill out at Mach 10 and let the good times roll!



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# Gul Chew Valley Open 2019

**Chew Valley SC hosted the final event of the 2019 Golden Dolphin series sponsored by Gul. Despite the gloomy forecast, sailors travelled from Essex, the Midlands and the south coast to join the local fleets from Chew, Portishead and Thornbury.**

Race 1 started promptly in 6 knots from the forecast SSW. Dave Hall & Paul Constable took an early lead on the trapezoid course, followed by Derian Scott & Graham Slater. Shifts and pressure (sufficient for most crews to get out on the wire) were key, and while Dave & Paul extended their lead to take the 1st race, last year's Golden Dolphin winners Kev Hope & Russell Thorne closed the gap up to second up the 2nd beat. Their inside rounding on the penultimate mark secured them 2nd place with Derian & Graham 3rd.



Fireballs at Chew Valley Lake - photo © Errol Edwards

The RO extended the length of the course for race 2. The fleet set off in 7 knots, which rapidly dropped to 5. Boats were tacking frequently on the shifts and it was Anthony & James Willcocks who played their cards right to lead round the windward mark. The wind direction had shifted, making the first reach very tight. Everyone who hoisted their kites soon dropped them. Unfortunately, Dan Johnson & Ben Latham held theirs a tad too long and lost their 2nd place while dropping the kite and climbing back up to mark 2. Dave & Paul took the advantage, moving up to 2nd, with Derian & Graham 3rd. The second beat had turned into a fetch, removing opportunities for place changing and the top 3 stayed the same to the finish. By the time race 3 started, the wind was looking patchier than ever. Kev & Russell danced between the dark patches on the water and took an unassailable lead. The rest of the boats flipped between joy and despair as they rolled the dice and climbed the ladder or slid down the snake. The reach turned into a fetch, the run a reach, and depending where one was on the lake any point of sailing. But Kev and Russell held the lead winning by a mile, while Dave & Paul drifted in to take 2nd with Dan & Ben 3rd.



Fireballs at Chew Valley Lake - photo © Errol Edwards

Sunday came and it looked like more of the same in spite of the forecast. The fleet were held on shore until there was a hint of the promised south westerly. The fleet got away as the wind arrived, it was a shifty and patchy wind off the start line. Dave and Paul took the lead and in spite of pressure from Kevin and Russell held on to the finish. The second race started in an increasing wind and boy did it increase! Kevin and Russell took an early lead with Dave and Paul following plus Isaac Marsh and Olly finally finding some form in the breeze. Kevin and Russell took the line just holding off Dave and Paul after they both had to drop their spinnakers to make the finish.



So, it was down to the last race. The wind had increased substantially with massive gusts. It became an eventful race, Kevin and Russel took the lead followed by Isaac and Olly. Dave and Paul got flattened up the first beat but by the first reach had worked into second. Kevin and Russell had a navigation error allowing Dave and Paul though to the lead. The race became a matter of survival. Dave and Paul kept the lead and in doing so won the event, they were followed in to the line by Anthony and James and then Dan and Ben . Thanks to Chew for hosting us, feeding us and laying on portaloos due to the main sewage pipe collapsing just days before the event. Thanks also go to R.O. Rob Mitchell and the race team for getting in the full series of races in tricky conditions.

The next and final event for the Fireballs is the [Gul](#) Inland Nationals at Draycote Water on 2nd and 3rd of November.



# Gul Inland Champs 2019

**The final event of the season, the Gul Inland Championships** will take place over the weekend of the 2nd and 3rd of November 2019 at Draycote Water SC in Warwickshire. With a strong local fleet that will be bolstered by travelling teams, the turnout is expected to be excellent. Go to [www.fireballsailing.org.uk](http://www.fireballsailing.org.uk) for the NOR and entry details. Gul has kindly provided excellent prizes and the fleet will be split into Gold, Silver and Bronze with prizes throughout. There is camping on site and the club has negotiated a special rate for people visiting DWSC at the Draycote Hotel, overlooking Draycote Water. Contact the hotel quoting Draycote Water SC for special rates.



photo © Nathalie Moreau

If you have any suggestions or can help in any way then please feel free to contact  
[Publicity@FireballSailing.org.uk](mailto:Publicity@FireballSailing.org.uk)

Don't forget, you can follow us on Twitter @ukfireball on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/UKFireballClass/> and visit our website <http://www.fireballsailing.org.uk> - There's loads of useful information on the site, from clubs where Fireballs are sailed, to technical, rigging and tuning guides, information about future open meetings, National, European and World Championships, reports and results from past events large and small. The discussion forum where (almost) anything goes, the classifieds for buying and selling all things Fireball. We're in the process of building an archive of older material so if you have anything which might be of use or ideas and suggestions, please get in touch.

Don't forget the gallery where you can find photos of Fireballs old and new, fast  
& faster, at home and away.

If your club has an event this winter which is even remotely connected to Fireballs we want to know so  
we can tell the wider community.

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Edited by Andy Robinson

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