



## GBC Challenge Regatta 2025

Ahah! The GBC annual challenge regatta – or, as it is known in these parts, “Which weather forecast shall we believe this year?” – was held on 21-22 June.

As ever, there are two sides to our regattas: the tides and the winds. Unlike elsewhere, our tides do not have much bearing on sailing round the racecourse. They do, however, make a huge difference as to whether all the sailors can get out of the harbour in the first place, and then back in at the end of the day. This year (“Hurrah!”), after clambering over the rocks, everyone got out without too many problems on both days, although tripping up a bit around the pier after racing was abandoned on Sunday.

The wind definitely has a dual nature – not so much Yin and Yang as Jekyll and Hyde with the added touch of a two-headed Hydra. Saturday saw our now customary benign Zephyr with at least one boat stuck in the doldrums, while the rest were breaking speed records on the other side of the course. It is still disconcerting to see the committee boat turning 90° before a race and then spinning 180° before the end of the same race. Sadly, Morven was not here to make the most of the local conditions and boost the GBC presence.

Sunday’s forecast promised only pain, and so it turned out. Rain jackets and sou’westers were the order of the day, while some gambled with their sails and others braved the elements but came back ashore before the start of racing. The first race was slightly delayed pending the departure of the “Hebridean Princess”, but the skipper knew what he was doing and did not disturb the dinghies.

So, to the action... The diet of the weekend’s examination was the usual six races with the “Round the Island” as the climax. Because of the forecast, it was decided to run the island race on Saturday, but after three races the wind was so inconsistent that there was a risk of getting stuck behind Horrisdale with either too much or too little breeze(!) The island race was not going to happen on Sunday.



The first race turned out to be a brisk affair around a diamond-shaped course with Vivienne in the Topper (the slowest boat in the fleet) leading from the back and winning on handicap. Good sailing. The second and third races each took almost twice as long overall in the fickle conditions with Matthew and Ori winning one each. The GBC fans found a new hero with Bruce, a relative novice, showing in third place after the first two races. We started with twelve boats, and only lost one when the wind dropped too much. At the end of the first day, the biggest contest was between the two Wayfarer crews, and the girls beat the boys...

Sunday more or less turned out as expected – a challenge to get out to the racecourse and a challenge to stay upright. We started with ten boats, but only eight made the start line and seven finished. The fourth race was two laps around a triangle and the most impressive sight was also the most bizarre. Matthew finished the race holding onto his boom after

the kicker (vang) failed, but he still managed to score. The sight of a couple of boats trying to run him down before the finish line was very exciting. Angela was one and actually won the race with her small sail handicap advantage. Ori was another, but was also competing in the bizarre stakes after attempting to “reef” his Laser Radial sail – not a successful experiment was his conclusion.

Although the fifth race was started, it was almost immediately abandoned with the Hydra turning up the heat on the wind generator. The safety boats were very busy as the sailors tried to reach the shelter of the harbour, but there were no more broken boats. The irony is that the Hydra was finally slain and the conditions turned ideal after all were ashore and changed. We could possibly have run the island race late on either day.

So, as Roger presented the prizes, the most interesting and unusual feature of the weekend was that the four races were won by different sailors, all from Lochcarron, so they galloped off with the Challenge Shield as usual. Matthew was 1<sup>st</sup> overall, Ori was 2<sup>nd</sup> and Vivienne 3<sup>rd</sup>. Bruce was given an award as the first GBC sailor – pretty good for someone who has only been sailing for a couple of years.



Matthew, Badachro Gin, Roger and Challenge Shield

Grateful thanks to the Badachro Distillery who sponsored the weekend. Matthew was last seen heading to the shop to get a lemon to go with his prize bottle of gin...

Duncan MacLean