

## **PRESS RELEASE AVAILABLE FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION: The Woonsocket Rockets top the leaderboard after day one at the 2009 British Open Team Racing Championship**

A clear blue sky and a chilly ten knot breeze greeted the forty two team racing squads competing in the 60th Wilson Trophy at West Kirby Sailing Club this morning. With the 2009 British Open Team Racing Championship title at stake there was a subtly serious edge to the otherwise convivial atmosphere which prevailed over the sailors' alfresco breakfast of coffee and bacon sandwiches. With perfect team racing conditions on offer, the highly efficient West Kirby Sailing Club moved smoothly into gear and racing commenced bang on time.

With no clear favourite to take the title and the general clubhouse consensus being that this year's event is one of the most open Wilson Trophies ever, there are a number of teams who must be thinking that, with a little luck, this might just be their year. Certainly it seems that in the 60th Anniversary year there are several teams making an appearance here after an absence of quite some time. Andy Green who won the Wilson Trophy ten years ago is back this year sailing for the Imperial Poona, explains the attraction 'There is simply no other event like this. The organisation and the quality of the racing are second to none. The club put a huge amount of effort into getting this right and it shows. Primarily though we are here this year because the Wilson Trophy is just tremendous fun.'



Also making a welcome return to the regatta are the Castaways Sublime, whose helms Jeremy Vine, James Grogono and Richard Keith were highly successful team racers back in the 60's and between them are responsible for no less than four Wilson Trophy victories. At three hundred and thirty eight, the combined age of the entire team is almost certainly an event record. With the host club having such a proud reputation for producing great team racers it is no surprise that there are several West Kirby teams competing this year. Understandably, with twelve months of bragging rights up for grabs, there is fierce rivalry between the local sailors making up the WKSC, Hibre Highlanders, Waders and the Hawks squads. It is a clear indication of how seriously the WKSC team in particular is taking this event that one of their helms, Chris Cameen, flew in from Australia yesterday especially for the regatta.

As the skies began to cloud and the breeze began to build around eleven o'clock the race made the timely call to switch to the smaller sails to ensure the emphasis was on team racing rather than just staying upright. The move back to big rigs was announced at about four o'clock, as the conditions moderated and the sunshine returned. This turned out to be a temporary lull as the best sailing breeze of the day returned for the final round and the crews were instructed to change back to small rigs.

As the racing progressed and the results began to flow in it was clear that a couple of the slick and highly drilled American teams were establishing a firm control of the leaderboard. After five rounds, three US crews: the Woonsocket Rockets, last year's finalists Larchmont and the whimsically named

Ungrateful Colonists, were all undefeated and made up the top three. Behind them Royal Thames, WKSC, Hawks, Society, Lions and Avenue had all recorded just one loss.

The spectators in the grandstand were being treated to some spectacular team racing battles and the match between BUSA and the Royal St George YC was a case in point. After an incredibly tight start with the boats manoeuvring for advantage just inches apart, there ensued a fearsome tacking match on the approach to the windward mark which resulted in RSGYC rounding in a winning 2,3,4 combination. Despite BUSA's best efforts the RSGYC held this advantage until the final beat.



However the combination of a penalty being awarded against one of the Irish boats and a sudden and significant right shift on the last beat meant the race was thrown wide open. To the agony of the RSGYC this allowed BUSA to steal the victory in the final boat lengths with a 1,2,6 scoreline. Late afternoon and with perfect team racing conditions in force, the race team made the call to press on in an effort to complete the seventh flight of the round robin series.

When racing ended today and after one hundred and forty seven matches had been sailed there were no teams who remained undefeated. The US entry Woonsocket Rockets top the leader board along with Royal Thames, Larchmont, WKSC and the Lions as the teams with only one defeat from seven races.

Tomorrow brings more round robin racing for the forty two teams who are battling to make the cut for the knock out stage of the 2009 Wilson Trophy. For some this will mean continuing where they left off today while others will know they need to step up their performances if the hope to have a chance of making it to the final eight come Sunday.

Images © Ollie Khedun

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Racing at the 2009 British National Team Racing Championship for the Wilson Trophy at West Kirby Sailing Club starts on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> May and runs through to Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> May.

You can follow all the action via the Live Results service on the Official Wilson Trophy Website at [www.wilsontrophy.co.uk](http://www.wilsontrophy.co.uk) .

Daily press releases containing a round up of the action will be issued to all major media outlets and will appear on the official event website.

Images from the official event photographer Ollie Khedun as well as streamed video will be posted on the official website as they become available.

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**For more information about the 2009 British Team Racing Championship for the Wilson Trophy or for access to high resolution images from the event please contact the official press officer, Justin Chisholm:**

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