

The British Open Team Racing Championship, taking place this coming weekend 1st to 3rd May at West Kirby Sailing Club, is the undisputed jewel in the crown of international dinghy team racing. Much more commonly known as simply the Wilson Trophy it is sixty years since the inception of this now iconic regatta and the organisers plan to celebrate the anniversary in style. The 2009 edition has attracted bumper entry and there is an action packed programme of entertainment planned for competitors and spectators alike.

Already widely acknowledged as the world's largest team racing event, the raw statistics for the three day spectacular serve to illustrate the breathtaking scale of the logistical challenge which the Wilson Trophy represents: 42 teams comprising 252 sailors will compete; around 300 individual races will be sailed in WKSC's 24 evenly matched Firefly dinghies and no less than 26 highly experienced umpires will deliver instant on-the-water justice to the competitors. The confines of the West Kirby Marine Lake create an ideal team racing environment as well as providing a natural amphitheatre for the thousands of spectators who will congregate to watch the action. An online Live Results service will provide up to the second scores as each match is completed via the official event website at www.wilson trophy.co.uk.

All the teams will compete in a round robin series from which the eight teams with the most wins will go through to a knockout stage on the final day. Successful teams will progress by way of quarter and semi finals, until only two teams remain to fight it out in a best of three races final to establish who will be crowned 2009 British Open Team Racing Champions and receive the Wilson Trophy. The unsuccessful finalists will receive the Runners Up Salver a new trophy recently presented by WKSC members Martin and Cheryl Whittingham-Jones in memory of Cheryl's late father. The best performing youth team will be awarded another new trophy, the Under 21 Trophy which has been presented by the Eric Twiname Memorial Trust.

Of the forty two teams arriving for this year's Wilson Trophy none will have travelled further than the four teams from the United States. Amongst their number are last year's runners up, the Larchmont Yacht Club, whose impressive line up includes US Olympic sailors Tim Wadlow and Carrie Howe. Their compatriots from the New York Yacht Club, are no stranger to the Wilson Trophy having won the event on its 50th Anniversary and are back again for another tilt at the title. The Canadian team racers from McGill University have been rebuilding their team racing squad over the last few years and believe that they have fielded their strongest ever team for this year's Wilson Trophy. After a break of some six years the organisers are delighted to welcome back a Czech team to compete for the Wilson Trophy, this time in the form of the Cuba Libres. Travelling from less far but equally warmly welcomed are the two teams from Ireland in the form of Dublin IRL1 and an entry from the Royal St George Yacht Club. Both these teams have strong team racing pedigrees and will be looking to be still in the mix come the final round.

Whilst it is hard to single out individual teams amongst the British squads who make up the bulk of the 2009 Wilson Trophy entry, surely the hosts West Kirby Sailing Club can

be safely included on any list of potential winners. The home club has won this event no less than fourteen times and this year have another strong line up which includes reigning Firefly National Champions Paul and Laura Kameen as well as the highly experienced match and team racer Leo Dixon. The Avenue All Stars from Southampton can boast an impressively star studded line up featuring double Match Racing World Tour champions Ian Williams and Simon Shaw along with Commodore's Cup winning helm John Greenland. Another British team with clear winning potential is The Lions who represented Great Britain at the recent Team Racing World Championships as GBR-1 and whose squad includes Steve Tylecote, the man who literally wrote the book on team racing.

Truth be told, there are any number of teams good enough to put on a Wilson Trophy winning performance during this regatta and picking a winner at this point is impossible. Rest assured though that the thrilling action out on the water this weekend will be equally matched by the party atmosphere ashore.

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

You can follow all the action via the Live Results service on the Official Wilson Trophy Website at www.wilsontrophy.co.uk .

Daily press releases containing a round up of the action will be issued to all major media outlets.

Images from the event 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:

+447769 938722

justin@justincholmsolutions.com

Skype: justinchis
