

# Catapults at Rutland Water

The Catapult TT event was run as part of the Rutland Cat Open over the weekend of 18-19 May 2024. Triangle-sausage courses were employed both days for this notably well-run event.

The forecast 10 to 15 knots failed to materialise on Day 1, so the first three races were sailed in light and shifty conditions, which meant you needed skill and luck to be working together to be successful on the race course.

## Race 1

Eamonn Cotter started at speed nearer the pin end of the line, and, as the wind bent progressively, those who had the windward gauge found themselves following in Eamonn's wake. Stuart Ede saw what was happening and tacked off, benefitting from more pressure up the middle of the course and giving him a substantial lead at the windward mark. However, down the next reach the wind filled in from



And they're off! John (533) and Stuart (531) go for a Committee Boat start, while Gareth (91) and Eamonn (505) choose the pin end.

© Syd Gage

behind, and the rest of the fleet led by Eamonn caught up. Stuart still had a small lead at the start of the sausage leg and went right followed by most of the fleet, except Eamonn who went left where he picked up some extra pressure along the north shore. This enabled him to snatch the lead at the windward mark, which he held to the finish. Close behind, Gareth Ede was challenging his dad down the run, and they crossed the line neck and neck, with Stuart, on the inside berth, claiming second place by just two seconds.



Action at the windward mark: Eamonn and Gareth round together. © Gordon Upton

## Race 2

John Terry squeezed between Stuart and the Committee Boat at the start of Race 2 to grab the windward gauge. He exploited that to reach the windward mark first followed closely by Gareth with Stuart a few boat lengths back. John held his lead on the reaches and up the next beat, but on the last downwind leg Gareth caught up with John, and a hand-to-hand duel ensued. Stuart who had been gaining on them hoped they would slow one another down so much that he could sneak through at the finish, but that was foiled by the wind dying. As they ran downwind to the finish John was keeping himself between Gareth and the line, but Gareth eased ahead just enough to be able to turn in front of John and snatch the win by only two seconds.

### Race 3

Race 3 demonstrated how in the shifty conditions making the right or wrong choice of direction up the beat could make a world of difference to progress. The fleet had kept together pretty well round the first triangle and sausage with Eamonn at the front of a tightly packed bunch. Had it not been for a the Race Officer deciding to let the fleet go round for another triangle, Eamonn might have won. But the next beat threw all the pieces in the air, and at the last windward mark John had a 100m lead over Gareth with Eamonn another 100m back, which determined the final places. Meanwhile Syd Gage and Stuart were fighting hard for fourth place, and they were side by side down the last two reaches with Stuart just a boat length ahead at the finish.

### Race 4

Day 2 dawned with champagne sailing conditions: sunshine and a Force 3 breeze, albeit a bit shifty and patchy at times. Eamonn was first to the windward mark followed closely by Gareth and John. Gareth overtook Eamonn downwind, and John got past up the next beat. The race then divided into two close-fought duels; Gareth versus John for first place and Eamonn versus Stuart for third place. On the final reach to the finish John was a couple of boat lengths ahead to take the win. Meanwhile Stuart was pressing Eamonn downwind but ended up 13 seconds behind as Eamonn took third at the line.



John Terry came a close second overall. © Gordon Upton

### Race 5

Gareth took an early lead at the windward mark, which he steadily increased to finish a full two minutes ahead of the fleet. Meanwhile John, Eamonn and Stuart (in that order) were in close company for the first triangle. On the beat of the sausage leg John went right, while Eamon and Stuart went left. They were rewarded with more pressure along the north shore and overtook John. However, John fought back up the beat of the final triangle to take second place leaving Eamonn and Stuart dicing with one another downwind. On the reach to the finish Eamonn

was challenging hard trying to get past Stuart first to windward and then to leeward, but Stuart hung on to take third place by a couple of boat lengths.

### Race 6

By now Gareth was into his stride and led away up the first beat. John led the chasing pack, but again Gareth built up a sizeable 200m lead. By the last triangle another 200m separated John from Eamonn with Stuart a further 150m back. On the next reach Stuart spotted more pressure down the middle of the lake and decided to downwind tack to take advantage of it, while Eamonn persevered along the rhumb line. Stuart's gamble paid off handsomely, so that at the gybe mark he had the inside track with his nose in front. Eamonn was right on Stuart's tail along the bottom reach, and as they turned upwind for the final sausage leg, rather than sail in Stuart's dirty wind, Eamonn decided to tack off in the hope of finding more pressure along the north shore again. Alas, this time it wasn't there, and Stuart, who

had sailed up the middle of the lake, had a healthy margin at the last windward mark, which he retained to the finish.

### Jon Montgomery TT Series results

Third place in the last race put Stuart on equal points with Eamonn, but Eamonn took third overall on countback thanks to his win in Race 1. It was tight for first place overall, too. Gareth, with three wins to John's two, finished a point ahead to win the event and the Blue Pennant. This put Gareth at the top of the TT Series leader board, so at the next event he will also be flying the Yellow Pennant.

Place	Helm	Race 1	Race 2	Race 3	Race 4	Race 5	Race 6	Total	Nett
1	Gareth Ede	(3)	1	2	2	1	1	10	7
2	John Terry	(4)	2	1	1	2	2	12	8
3	Eamonn Cotter	1	(4)	3	3	4	4	19	15
4	Stuart Ede	2	3	(4)	4	3	3	19	15
5	Syd Gage	(6)	6	5	6	6	6	35	29

### Alastair Forrest Personal Handicap Series results

The Catapult Class Association also runs a personal handicap series based on the same set of races. Syd Gage, who is struggling with injury, won on handicap the only race he was able to complete, while Eamonn won Race 1 both on the water and on handicap. However, Stuart could claim the remaining four wins, so he took the Lilac Pennant for the event win, to which he added the Magenta Pennant for being top of the Handicap Series leader board.



Stuart, who came 1<sup>st</sup> on personal handicap, enjoys the champagne sailing.  
© Gordon Upton

Place	Helm	Race 1	Race 2	Race 3	Race 4	Race 5	Race 6	Total	Nett
1	Stuart Ede	(2)	1	2	1	1	1	8	6
2	Eamonn Cotter	1	(2)	2	2	2	2	11	9
3	John Terry	3	3	(4)	3	3	3	19	15
4	Gareth Ede	4	4	(5)	4	3	4	24	19
5	Syd Gage	(6)	6	1	6	6	6	35	29