

FOUL WEATHER NO DETERENT TO PERFORMANCE



In atrocious conditions with a biting NE F6 wind and driving rain, 11 youngsters opened the RYA East Honda Youth RIB 2012 competition with a display of tenacity and skill. The first of five regional heats in the annual youth power boat skills handling challenge, held at Paxton Lakes Sailing Club, near St Neots, last Saturday, saw the youngsters achieve times close to those of the national finals.

Four of the youngsters had only had three training sessions, while the winner of the older age group hadn't sat in a boat since last summer and she set the fastest time of the day!

Senior powerboat instructor and the event organiser for the club, Dave Rothwell said: "I cannot believe just how well all the youngsters drove. Everyone showed exemplary skills and boat handling, nobody crashed the gears, nobody flooded the boat, all of them drove safely. They can all drive a RIB with a high degree of competency. And despite the terrible conditions they all enjoyed themselves."

The winner of the senior class, a somewhat surprised Sophie Redman-Baber, said: "I enjoyed that, it was good fun." The 15-year-old who is studying for exams hadn't sat in a boat let alone driven a RIB since the regional final in July last year.

The event was something of a family affair as her younger brother Lewis (11) won the junior age group. Brothers Bobby and Andy Martin ran second and third in the senior group.

Twelve-year-old Amy Beswick took second place in the junior to be followed home by first timer Dexter Bond in third.

The Honda RYA Youth RIB Challenge involves the youngsters in two age groups, eight to 12 and 13 to 16, driving a five-metre RIB powered by a 50 hp outboard round a highly skilful course against the clock. Each youngster gets an off-course practice followed by two runs of the course. Time penalties are given for hitting buoys or not completing specific tasks.

In the Eastern Region the competitors get to the regional final (at Island Yacht Club, Canvey Island, Essex on Saturday June 29, 2012) via a series of area heats. The North West heat hosted by Paxton Lakes SC kicked off this year's competition. The next heat will be the South West area heat at Fishers Green SC on Bank Holiday Monday, May 7, followed the South East area heat at Stubbers Activity Centre, Ockenden, Essex on Saturday May 12, the North East area heat at Lowestoft Hamilton Marina on Saturday, May 26 and by the East Area at Ardliegh SC, Colchester on Saturday June 9.

The three top places in each class at each heat go forward to the regional final, from where the winner of each age group goes to represent the region at the national final at the Southampton Boat Show on Sunday September 16, 2012. The national winners win boats for their clubs and a host of goodies for themselves.

Results:

13 to 16-age group:

1. Sophie Redman-Baber 1.12.88
2. Bobby Martin 1.14.93
3. Andy Martin 1.26.69

8 to 12 age group:

1. Lewis Redman-Baber 1.15.12
2. Amy Beswick 2.17.69
3. Dexter Bond 2.18.50



Regional HYR timekeeper Jo Curtis, SI Dave Rothwell and junior winner Lewis Redman-Baber.



Left: Sophie Redman-Baber overall winner.

Right: The irrepressible Bobby Martin who ran Sophie a close second.



The locals were totally unfazed.....