

## Contessa 26 Nationals

Hosted superbly by Lymington Town Sailing Club, it was brilliant to see a record number of 15 boats lining up to take part in years Contessa 26 Nationals and with the number of new faces great to see the fleet continuing to grow and develop.

Saturday started in what looked like increasingly breezy conditions and after a quick briefing and shot of caffeine, the IRC class set off for their first up wind down wind race. It quickly became apparent that it would be a closely fought series with Applejack (Craig Cossar) and Jiminy Cricket (Mike Harrison) claiming the top two spaces, a theme set to continue for the subsequent races, followed by Elinor (Rupert Houlton).

The second race for the IRC class was the first race for the class 2 (Spinnaker) and class 3 (Non-spinnaker) and saw all boats lining up on the same line. This proved to be fairly hectic with most of the fleet jostling for the prime spot at the committee boat end of the line. IRC class was steered across the line by Jiminy Cricket followed by Applejack and Meow (Chris Charlesworth), Class 2 was led by Quincy (Bob Coats), followed by Thousand Knights 3 (Richard Pickance) then Red Dragon (Ben Pugh) and Class 3 by Curvaceous (Mark and Deborah Arnold) and Vivanaut (Piers Thomas) with new comers Sophie (Mike Parr) taking third over the line.

Saturday's final race saw the whole fleet lining up again for a short circuit around the cans. With the breeze picking up and challenging wind angles not many were able to hoist their spinnakers on the downwind leg making the racing even closer. The front three boats in the IRC class, Jiminy Cricket, Applejack and Elinor were separated by only 35 secs on elapsed time. Like the IRC class, class 2 was also competitive with Thousand Knights 3 leading Quincy and Red Dragon closely followed by Sulali (Simon Jollands) in fourth. Curvaceous maintained their lead in class 3 crossing the line comfortably in front of Sophie to complete the days racing before the rain came in.

Saturday closed sheltering from the rain sharing notes on the day's events in the bar followed by a fantastic dinner, shared with the Contessa 32 fleet, at Lymington Town Sailing Club.

Sunday brought similar conditions to the previous day and with all the play for there were some serious faces heading out to the start. As the fleet lined up for the final around the cans circuit it was clear none of the competitiveness of the previous day had been lost with a hotly contested start seeing Applejack coming out in front and leading the fleet up the northern shore to the windward mark.

Sunday saw a number of retirements, with Jiminy Cricket leaving the race after problems with her headsail and La Mouette (Geoff Pickard) and Sulali retiring after a collision. With Jiminy Cricket out of the picture Applejack was allowed to clear up and take the title for the IRC class followed by Elinor and Meow. In class 2 Thousand Knights 3 maintained her lead and taking first place ahead of Red Dragon and Quincy. Class 3 continued to be dominated by Curvaceous who easily crossed the line ahead of Vivanaut closely followed by Windchase (Jake Oliver).

Lymington Town Sailing Club ran an excellent event, providing some close racing in testing conditions and a great atmosphere to relax in off the water. Looking forward to seeing as many if not more at the 2017 Nationals!

The overall results were;

	1st	2nd	3rd
IRC	Applejack	Jiminy Cricket	Elinor
Class 2 (with Kites)	Thousand Knights 3	Red Dragon	Quincy
Class 3 (no Kites)	Curvaceous	Vivanaut	Sophie