

Guildford Rowing Club

Junior Squad

Conditions

The weather was better than Dorney, Bedford and Henley, but it was still a damp, cold day with some rain in Division 1 and a constant light headwind over the second half of the course.

WJ15 impermeability meant the conditions had no impact on the crew's enthusiasm for racing, although there were some interesting rowing-up outfits styled by our crews.

Race Report

Hampton Small Boats Head

Saturday 24th November 2018

Raced on the River Thames over "approximately 3000 metres" downstream from Sunbury Lock and finishing past Platt's Eyot island



WJ15 Coxed Quad – Sofia (cox) Adelaide, Francesca, Aimee & Rebecca



Crew race planning between divisions and double double trouble lining-up with 124 other doubles ready to start Division 2

Hampton Small Boats Head was a great testament to the competence of the organisers and composed "professionalism" of so many young rowers that over 700 boats launched and raced at this year. Guildford Junior crews gave their all in three of them.

Although advertised as a 3,000m course the actual distance is approximately 2,600m. The course begins with a 500m straight followed by two long opposing bends and then another final 500m straight alongside Platt's Eyot.

Racing Commentary

Division 1 boats launched at 9:00 with the WJ15 coxed quad (4x+) crew of Rebecca, Aimee, Francesca, Adelaide and Sofia coxing in *Queen of Hearts* making their way up to the start over the full length of the course. Starting at 10:00 *Queen* was the 22nd boat of 392 drawn to start in the morning Division.

Representation

Hampton SBH is a Junior only event and it was a small contingent from Guildford Juniors competing at this year with three WJ15 crews entered in two events.

This year there were no events for Under-14s and "rowing-up" was not allowed.

The crew started purposefully and quickly settled on a rating of 31/32 with Sofia steering a course in the faster water and avoiding any problems with other crews.

The WJ15s appeared to close the gap on the Surbiton HSBC boat ahead in the middle section of the race, but by the final straight the clear water had opened-up again by a few lengths. Wimbledon HSBC starting immediately behind *Queen* never challenged the very composed Guildford crew.

In Division 2 the two WJ15 doubles of Aimee and Francesca in *Dormouse* and Rebecca and Silvia in *The Snark* boated at 1:30 to row up to the start to join a growing queue of 124 doubles stretching over 1km.

First-off in the group of WJ15 doubles Aimee and Francesca settled down quickly into a smooth rhythm rowing comfortably within themselves until shifting gears and finding a bit of extra pace at about 800m in. Here they were quickly closing-in on the WJ16 Emmanuel SBC double that started ahead of them. Although instructed by marshals to give way and allow Guildford through the Emmanuel WJ16s stayed put in the faster water forcing Aimee to steer a tougher course along the bank. Emmanuel rallied to try to fight off Guildford and it took a few hundred meters for Francesca and Aimee to push their way past and finally break contact. Job done they then set about catching the next WJ16 2x of Kingston Grammar SBC reeling them in steadily and taking them before their final sprint past the island to the Finish.

Racing together for the first time this season in our brand new lightweight double, *The Snark*, Rebecca and Silvia started 5th in a pack of 14 WJ15 doubles. They rowed bravely and were still moving well coming up to the island with 700m to go. Even though the tank was starting to empty the girls committed to a final push with a sprint to the line.

Results

Guildford's WJ15 Quad finished 17th in a line-up of 42 crews at 5.6% off the winner and 7.1% better than the average time. In what appeared to be a stronger field this was an overall improvement on Henley Sculls where the Guildford result was 7.1% off the pace (winner) and 5.5% better than the average finish. Nevertheless, the crew had expected more and are now focused on the learning points for Burway and beyond.

The WJ15 doubles finished 12th and 25th in a field of 33 with Aimee and Francesca finishing in 12:37 and Rebecca and Silvia in 13:25

Full results on Spond

Learning

Under 15 racing is a significant step-up from last season in most respects

Rating should be geared to best boat speed and course length

Having a race plan is important. Executing it is a crucial technique just like any other

Coxswains and bow steers can assert their rights with boat positioning when overtaking in heads



Hampton SBH Course

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to club stalwart Danny Skillman who actually managed to be in two places at once and especially Mike Boddington for towing both ways.

Next-up

The Junior squad is racing next at Burway Small Boats Head on Saturday 1st December 2018 and the GRC away team includes some Senior crews. This challenging head race runs over a course of approximately 3,000m upstream and this year also includes race classes for Under-13s. Winning boats will finish within approximately 10:00 to 12:00 minutes depending on age and boat type.

Following Burway many of our athletes are racing at the British Indoor Rowing Championships 2018 at the Velo Park, Lee Valley on 8th December. Indoor rowers and relay teams will take on the nation's best at individual distance, timed and in four-person relay races. We are also hoping to spot some International rowers laying down serious Wattage. If you are not signed up yet it's not late to come along on the GRC Junior BRIC Bus as a spectator for this fun event.



British Indoor Rowing Championships 2017