

## ICRA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS 2009

The ICRA National Championships were decided in sparkling sailing conditions on Tralee Bay on Saturday with fresh winds building to 23 knots providing exciting sailing and great battles between the leading contenders in all Classes.

Class 0 and 1 were on windward/leeward courses accurately set by Race Officer Alan Crosbie and his team. Dave Dwyer's Mariners Cove sailed by Peter O Leary retained his National title after a tight match racing battle with Eamon Rohan's Blondie sailed by Tom Fitzpatrick. Tim Costello's Tiamat took third place. George Sisk's Wow had a great win in Echo.

Class 1 was a highly competitive 25 boat fleet with great scenes at weather and leeward marks as slick crew work gained places in the strong winds. Paul O'Higgins Rockabill sailed by Mel Collins emerged as champions from Royal Cork Admiral Mike Mc Carthy on Checkmate. Anthony O leary's modified 1720 did well among the bigger boats to take third place. T Whelan's Royal Westerns Chaos won Echo.

Class 2 and 3 fought out their final day on equally testing round the cans courses again superbly laid by Race Officer Rob Lamb and his team. These classes finishing their final race off the pier head in Fenit was a fabulous scene. The courses had exciting tight reaches under big spinnakers seeing spectacular wipe outs as boats pushed their limits and struggled at the gybe mark. Richard Colwell and John Murphy's Kinetic also retained her National title in Class 2 but only after a nail biting battle with local sigma F O Connells Treyona and Sligo's Conor Ronan' Ruthless with Olympian David Burrows on board. Treyona also collected the Echo National title and best local boat.

Class 3 saw J. Ward's Hallmark from Clifden win their National title from Howths favorites Vincent Gaffney's Alliance in a dramatic finale. J Buckley's Battle from Foynes collected the bronze in third place. Alliance picked up the Echo title.

ICRA were delighted that the event attracted 75 top boats that enjoyed spectacular scenes and backdrops and top class racing in Tralee Bay. The competitors enthused at the vision to bring the Nationals to the West Coast. Tralee Sailing Club under Commodore Liam Lynch did themselves proud with good organisation and a traditional warm welcome the whole area bought into. Up to 600 competing sailors brought a welcome tourism boost to the region.

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