

Catapults dominate Gill Cat Open

It was a Catapult 1, 2 and – oh, so nearly - 3 at the Gill sponsored Medium Handicap Catamaran Open at Grafham Water SC over the weekend of 26-27 October.

Catapults showed their light airs capability against a handicap fleet comprising mostly Dart 18 single-handers. Gareth Ede won the coveted £75 Gill Marine gift voucher, and John Terry picked up a Gill sailing holdall for coming second. Tied on points for third place with two Dart helms was Stuart Ede, but he lost out on tie break, ending up in fifth.



Prospects for the event looked bleak with a low/no wind forecast for the weekend, and the Saturday proved unsailable. Faced with the prospect of second windless day on the Sunday, two of the five Catapult helms baled out, so it was a pleasant surprise for John Terry and father and son, Stuart and Gareth Ede, when Race Officer, Nigel Denchfield, conjured up just enough breeze to run at least one race, and he sent the fleets off on a trapezoid course.

Race 1

Gareth and Stuart spotted a wind shift in the countdown to the start that favoured a port tack flyer, and they sailed across the front of the fleet to head off up the right side of the

beat with Gareth in the lead. John soon tacked off to follow them, and he just slotted into second place ahead of Stuart as they rounded the windward mark. They stayed in this order round the two laps of the course finishing with 50 seconds between each of them.

Gareth sails to victory in the Gill Cat Open
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Race 2

This time another attempt at a port tack flyer by Gareth and Stuart was foiled by the Darts who had got wise to the tactic and sailed down the line on starboard, so Gareth and Stuart were forced to tack and sail out to the left of the beat.

Nevertheless Gareth was still first to the windward mark followed closely by John. At the end of the first lap a wind shift and lull meant they could not lay the Committee Boat from the bottom mark. Seeing this, Stuart tacked immediately as he rounded the mark and went through the line at the pin end. He held onto this favoured tack and went up the left side of the beat. However, tacking onto the lay line, his hopes of stealing a march on the



It's in the bag – 2nd placed John bags himself a Gill sailing holdall. © Paul Sanwell/OPP

leaders were dashed when the breeze died and dealt him a 30 degree header. So he was forced watch as first Gareth and then John, benefitted from a lift and more pressure on the right side of the beat to sail into a large lead which they held to the finish with Gareth finishing 100 seconds ahead of John.

The breeze soon started dying across the whole course as the rest of the Medium Handicap fleet and the following Dart 15 fleet crept over the line. There then followed a long wait to see if the breeze would return sufficiently to allow more races to be run. When it did shows signs of coming back, Race Officer Nigel and the mark layers did a sterling job setting and resetting the course until the breeze finally settled in direction. Fortunately their efforts and the patience of the waiting fleets were rewarded, and Race 3 got under weigh.

Race 3

Stuart led off the line on starboard tack near the pin end with John hard on his heels. John stole a march at the windward mark, but Stuart was able to sail over him on the top reach to regain the lead. Stuart, John and Gareth stayed in close company round the two laps of the course with just half a minute separating each of them at the finish.

Race 4

Wanting to get to more pressure on the right of the beat Gareth and Stuart started on port from mid line ducking behind most of the fleet. Starboard starter John soon tacked to join them, and by the windward mark he had overtaken Stuart and was hard on Gareth's heels. They stayed relatively close together for the remaining three laps but Gareth held on to his lead to claim his third win by 40 seconds over John, with Stuart another half minute back. This cemented Gareth's victory in the Catapult TT event which formed part of the Cat Open.

Gill Medium Handicap Catamaran Open top 5 results

Gareth scored not only three wins in the Catapult TT but also three wins in the Medium Handicap Cat Open making him the convincing winner of the overall event, his reward for which was a £75 Gill Marine gift voucher. John's two seconds and a third to count gave him a comfortable margin over the next three boats tied on points for third place (including fellow Catapult helm Stuart), and that secured him a Gill sailing holdall.

Place	Helm	Class	Club	Race 1	Race 2	Race 3	Race 4	Total	Nett
1	Gareth Ede	Catapult	Catapult Class Assn	1	1	(7)	1	6	3
2	John Terry	Catapult	Yorkshire Dales SC	2	2	(5)	3	12	7
3	Paul Blackburn	Dart 18	Stokes Bay SC	3	6	(8)	2	19	11
4	Mat Exon	Dart 18	Royal Yorkshire YC	5	4	2	(6)	17	11
5	Stuart Ede	Catapult	Catapult Class Assn	4	(9)	3	4	20	11

Jon Montgomery Travellers Trophy Series

The Grafham Cat Open marked the last event of the season in the Catapult sailing calendar, and John's second place confirmed his position at the top of the leader board to get his name on the Jon Montgomery Travellers Trophy for 2024. Remarkably, because he had missed several events while he worked on his new house, Gareth's victory at Grafham pushed him into second place in the Series just pipping George Evans on count-back.

Place	Helm	Race 1	Race 2	Race 3	Race 4	Total	Nett
1	Gareth Ede	1	1	(3)	1	6	3
2	John Terry	(2)	2	2	2	8	6
3	Stuart Ede	(3)	3	1	3	10	7
4=	Syd Gage	(6)	6	6	6	24	18
4=	Chris Phillips	(6)	6	6	6	24	18

Alastair Forrest Personal Handicap Series

The Catapult Class Association runs a personal handicap series in parallel with the TT Series, and Stuart's three wins at Grafham enabled him to knock George Evans off the top slot to claim the Alastair Forrest Trophy for 2024. John on equal points with George, but with less race wins, grabbed the third podium position in the Series.

Place	Helm	Race 1	Race 2	Race 3	Race 4	Total	Nett
1	Stuart Ede	1	(3)	1	1	6	3
2	John Terry	(2)	1	2	2	7	5
3	Gareth Ede	(3)	2	3	3	11	8
4=	Syd Gage	(6)	6	6	6	24	18
4=	Chris Phillips	(6)	6	6	6	24	18