

PRESS RELEASE

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Monsoon Spring Series 2024, Races 1 & 2

(For immediate release) It was a grey, uninspiring morning but at this time of year it's not unusual to have conditions warming up late afternoon and, with some luck, the wind filling in later in the day. Well, that's almost how it happened on Saturday, the 24th of February, as the Hebe Haven Yacht Club kicked off its racing season with a healthy turnout for the first two races of its Monsoon Spring Series 2024.

After a briefing to the volunteers on *Hebe One*, race officer of the day, Queenie Ho, gave the nod to Coxswain Mikey at 1130 and the committee boat was soon making its way out of Hebe Haven and into Port Shelter. The wind at noon was from the northeast, just over 6 knots, and certainly enough to get the four fleets across their respective start lines.

A short 'up & down' course was laid, using the app Buoy Zone to increase accuracy. Distance to the top mark was 0.7 nautical miles so, if the wind held, it was going to mean everyone home in under an hour. They were. Having started at 1400, the sole IRC entry – *Talkinghead* – finished in 32 minutes and 56 seconds and the last PHS boat to finish – *Scrumpy* – passed the committee boat after 51 minutes and 56 seconds of racing.

On handicap, the PHS division saw Robin Cook's *Ichiban* emerge victorious, ahead of *No One Else* and Simon Lynch's *Bucephalus*. The Sportsboats division was won by rising star, Nelson lam, in *Jazz*, beating the VX One, *Serendipity*, into 2nd and *No Rush* 3rd.

Veteran one-design sailors Bart & Sytske Kimman topped the Dragon leaderboard in *Wyuna*, with *Dragonfly* in 2nd and *Celines* 3rd.

But, as the start for Race 2 for IRC and Sportsboats approached, the pressure dropped and the RO had no option but to raise the AP flag which stayed in effect until 1534. A good call because, as it turned out, the breeze slowly began to fill in and, finally at 1530, when she sent them away, everyone was moving at a reasonable speed. Also, the wind had shifted so the course had to be adjusted and the AP gave the RO time to get things right.

As an aside, one change to the instructions this year was for the starting window to be increased from 4 minutes to 10 minutes. This not only allows time for 'engineless' boats to arrive for the first race of the day, but also gives the race officer time to start the second race without having to wait too long for slow finishers in the previous race.

The second, combined IRC and Sportsboats start saw 10 boats head off for their top mark followed, five minutes later, by a lively PHS fleet, *Minnie the Moocher* leading the way. That's how it stayed until the finish with *Minnie* taking line and PHS handicap honours ahead of *Bucephalus* and *AmaZe*. Last boat home was the struggling *Happy King* while *Baby Beluga* and *H₃O* never made it.

The competitive Sportsboat division was won by Eliot Cargile's *Pawley*, ahead of Patrick Pender's very quick VX One, *Serendipity*. 3rd place was filled by *Golden Dragon*, with *Catch 22* in 4th.

The 11-strong Dragons' division was won by *Elfje* which beat *Celines* into 2nd and *Mei Fei* 3rd. The last Dragon home was *Shiva*.

All up, 34 boats were out racing – a good start to the season while the two short courses ensured the timekeepers were kept busy all afternoon!

The next race in the Monsoon Spring Series will be held on Saturday, the 2nd of March 2024.

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About Hebe Haven Yacht Club

Hebe Haven Yacht Club is a private members club established in the Pak Sha Wan, Sai Kung area in 1963. The Club provides first-class yacht racing and boating facilities for members. The Club also works closely with local schools and organisations, to offer training facilities and professional instruction to develop youth sailing in Hong Kong. In addition, as a 'Caring Organisation' member, the Club proactively contributes to the local community with regularly organised events.

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