

The RS700 Rooster Tour (+) Year: 2022

After another fantastic year on the RS700 Rooster Tour with some beautiful venues, friendly clubs, great organisation and most importantly great sailing and a year where I took over as Class Chairman I thought I would share my reflections on the season.

We crawled from under our Winter blankets to start the racing season in April with our first event of the year: Totally Stoked hosted by Stokes Bay SC. Racing with the Mustos in chilly 20-25 knot gusty offshore conditions proved challenging for the fleet. As ever Theo Galyer started the season the way he finished it the previous year. Theo led the way chased hard by Rich Wadsworth and Matt Conner fighting for position ahead of the rest of the fleet. Stokes is always a great start to the season and we will be back in 2023.

From there the fleet ventured to Oxford for a weekend of light wind inland racing where wiley Pete Purkiss set out his intentions for tour dominance by finding every zephyr available and keeping ahead of Matt Conner and Miles Roebuck to take the second tour event win.

Seeking more wind, sunshine and waves we then travelled to Carnac to race against the French. Here Pete continued his dominance over the fleet in light wind and despite best efforts when the breeze picked up by the others Pete took another tour win.

Returning from France we started to gear up for the Europeans at the RS Games with visits to Weston and Lymington splitting the fleets in two venues over two weekends. Theo sent a clear message that he was maintaining his speed across all conditions at Weston with Rob chasing hard. Despite forgetting my rudder and daggerboard and being bailed out by Heather and Nathan (thank you) I managed a first event win at Lymington ahead of Pete who was by now making a clear statement of intent for the Rooster Tour.

We then moved to the RS Games at WPNSA for a fantastic four days of racing at our Europeans and Noble Marine Nationals. With nearly 40 boats, including five Czech boats, we had great racing in varied wind conditions inside and outside the harbour. Some massive waves on day one set the tone for a challenging week in which Rob Higgins gave Theo a run for his money threatening to take the throne. However, Theo held on dominating the windy conditions to come out on top winning his first European title and then promptly selling his boat and turning his attention to becoming a Dad. Pete Purkiss deserves a mention for pushing the hardest on the starts resulting in the most OCSs in a single day in the fleets history and another first when Matt Conner became the first sailor to be protested in the fleet in living memory!

The fleet then moved to Lancing SC to join me at my home club with a promise of sailing in some more waves. Instead we had two days of racing in super gusty offshore conditions where I managed to stay ahead of Pete Purkiss and Matt Conner.

As we headed to Chew Valley for the Rope4Boats Inlands this left Pete on top of the Rooster Tour standings chased hard by Matt Conner who had sailed consistently well throughout the Tour events. At his home club Rob again showed incredible speed in all conditions to come out on top and take the title. Pete came third securing the Tour title with Matt Conner second and Nathan Steffenoni third.

The Rooster National Tour in 2022 provided great sailing in varied conditions across the UK and France. The new weight compensation system proved really successful with little or no impact of taking the lead out of the boat. The lighter sailors enjoyed some great success with Pete winning the Tour across a range of wind strengths on hole 6 and Rob winning the inlands and coming 2nd at the windy Europeans on hole 5. Thank you to all the clubs that hosted our events and the volunteers who made it happen, RS for the support, all the sailors that travelled, raced and supported each other and Rooster for their continued support to our fantastic class. Thanks to Clare our RS Class Association secretary for her unwavering support. Special thanks to Theo who has not only served as class chairman for the past three years but has

helped bring numerous new faces to the fleet and delivered multiple training sessions which has benefitted so many, helped access into the class and improved racing across the fleet.

Looking forward to next year we have another exciting programme that will see events across Europe and the UK. The fleet is so incredibly supportive and accommodating of all levels that there really is no barrier to moving from club racing to the Tour. I urge anyone that is considering doing an event next year to join the Tour. You will not only meet fantastic people but get amazing advice and guidance on rigging, maintenance and boat handling and learn far faster that you may otherwise do. If you can't wait until the new Tour season reach out to the fleet to see what sailing is available at our home clubs over the Winter. We will also continue Theo and Rob's hard work and confirm dates for training in 2023 in due course. I look forward to seeing you on the water!

2023 RS700 calendar here: <https://www.rs700.org/index.asp?fleet=RS700&pg=eventsgrid>

RS700 facebook group here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1485113635132398/?fref=ts>

By Matt Carter



RS700 fleet photo taken by Digital Sailing at the 2022 Euros and Noble Marine Nationals at the RS Games