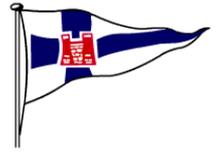




# Lough Erne Yacht Club

## Report - 35<sup>th</sup> Irish National J/24 Championship 29-31 August 2014



Led by John Patrick McCaldin, a team of almost twenty LEYC members and friends did us proud with an excellent and detailed job organising our Club's hosting of the 35<sup>th</sup> Irish National J/24 Championship, a three day event that made full use of our race management facilities, including crane, Race Officer boat, bar and perhaps most notable Rose Gilroy's uniquely magnificent catering! Over sixty sailors in a dozen International J/24 keelboats competed. Visiting boats from all four coasts of Ireland and its centre waters, Lough Ree were launched on Friday for two races that afternoon, four on Saturday and two on Sunday. The first four overall were each past Champions, including John Patrick McCaldin in *Jamais Encore*.

All eight races were tough tight contests among seasoned crews in strong west and north winds, making this Lough Erne's best and biggest sailing sport event for some years. Courses started upwind, hard going, then dramatic down wind, spinnaker hoisted, bulged full of wind to drive boats surfing wildly on the waves.

The tightest tussle between crews, skills well -honed by the end of the season, was the contest for best inside positions rounding the leeward mark, dropping spinnaker, re-hoisting foresail, rounding then hardening onto the wind for the hard beat to windward - superb sport in the world's most popular racing keelboats, and great it was to see it again here on Lough Erne.

points clear of another past Irish Champion, Stefan Hyde, Royal Cork YC, in *Hamilton Bear*. The defending Champion, *Howth YC's* youth team made third overall in *Kilcullen*. (picture)



Steve Atkinson helming *Bád* from Carrickfergus SC also had a rudder fitting broken at the start of Saturday's last race. Repaired overnight, he competed on Sunday, had missed Friday's races and emerged tenth overall.

One of the new J/24 fleet building at Sligo YC, *Crazy Horse*, helmed by Tim Corcoran made a creditable fifth overall. Sixth, from Lough Swilly, was *JGuevara*, helm John Hassan, crew including LEYC's *Nessa Scott* (Nee Murnaghan).

Lough Ree's *Finbar Ryan* and daughters in *Jelignite* made seventh. Eighth was *Martin McNamara's Django*, Royal Western YC, towed by road all the way from Clare up to the Erne.



Almost twice the number of boats had raced in the Silver Anniversary J/24 National Championship ten years ago. Half were old Westerly built boats. This year there were only three. *Judie Anderson's Bandit* (picture), ninth, helm Luke McBride, Lough Swilly, who won the Silver Fleet trophy. (*Bandit* was in the LEYC fleet for many years). Second Silver was *Michael Clarke's Jeriatrix*, LEYC, in her first championship outing for 8 years, and third *John Buckley's Jagged Edge* from Sligo YC.

A final good news point: two LEYC teenagers got crew places in visiting J/24s: *Tim Boomer* and *Charlie Finn* – she was also in a RIB.

**MTC 3.9.14**

**Many thanks to Peter Scott for the excellent action photographs**



LEYC's top helm (picture below) and a former Irish National Champion, John Patrick revels in hard winds. In *Jamais Encore* his scores included three firsts but also two penalties. One was for OCS, on course side, seconds early at the third race start (picture, far left) Irish J/24 starts can be very tightly timed with the experience of World and European J/24 Championships in Ireland in 2011 and 2013.



The other penalty was for not finishing the third race because *Jamais Encore's* rudder broke. Ashore, a spare rudder fitted and back to the fleet, the *Jamais* team boldly won both race five and then race six for an *Encore*. Enough to secure a fourth overall, where with better luck they might well have won.

Also with three firsts and an OCS, *Flor O'Driscoll*, *Howth YC* emerged 2014 Irish J/24 National Champion in *Hard on Port*, five