

IRB Sport report

European IRB 'Open' Club Event – Bournemouth

A superb day of IRB Racing was held on Saturday 26th September between Bournemouth and Boscombe Piers. Teams from Denmark, Germany, Wales, Cornwall, Devon and Wessex competed in flat conditions, but with superb weather.

The new SLSGB event staging formed a perfect focus point for the arena. Surrounded by Life Saving Sport banners and decked in SLSGB feather flags the whole event looked both professional and well run.

The team from Wales was outstanding with a first and third in the Mass Rescue, first in the Tube Rescue and a second place in the Teams and the Single Rescue events. Denmark took out the prestigious Single Rescue event from lane nine, the first time all nine lanes have ever been used at an IRB Sport event in the UK. What made it all the more amazing was that they wear wearing helmet with head cameras! The German team from Friedberg surprised even themselves by coming second in the Tube Rescue, a superb effort although Devon team Bantham were disappointed not to have won the Tube Rescue at their first IRB Sport event when the driver pulled a hamstring running for the finish line. Local teams Southbourne and Branksome were the other main place getters with Southbourne taking out the Teams Rescue and coming a close third behind Wales in the Single Rescue. With Branksome coming second in the Mass Rescue the stage was set for the hotly contested British IRB Champs the next day.



Wales, eventual winners, coming in on the first leg of the Mass Rescue final

For a full set of results from the European IRB 'Open' Club Event click [here](#).

British IRB Champs

A second day of stunning weather really set the scene for a tightly contested day of racing. Once again, the course looked superb and the teams really felt they were competing at a National Championships.

Following on from their disappointment at the European event, new boys Bantham were hopeful of winning gold in the Tube Rescue. They crossed the line an easy first only to be

disqualified for a technical infringement during the patient pick up leaving Saunton with the gold medal and the RNLI trophy, Southbourne the silver and Whitsand Bay with the Bronze. The Bantham lads went away with the voice of their coach still ringing in their ears 'warm up, stretch and don't whatever you do get DQ'd in the final'!



Drivers race off to their boats at the start of the British IRB Champs

In the final of the Mass Rescue event, Southbourne were convincing winners picking up gold and the Warren Mitchell trophy followed by Hayle and Saunton Sands. The Teams Rescue event, contested for the first time with medals and for the SLSGB trophy saw the Bantham crew gain a consolation bronze medal for the hard work and training they'd put in. However, once again it was the local club Southbourne who romped away with the gold medal, this time only just in front of Saunton who were chasing them down over the final stretches of the race. In last event, the 'blue ribbon' Single Rescue, teams were contesting the coveted Arancia Trophy and true to form it was local team Southbourne who blitzed the field to take the gold with a whisper between Saunton Sands and Hayle for silver and bronze.

With only three ladies teams entering there was an expectation that the women's event would be a disappointment. However, the hotly contested races between Whitsand Bay and Southbourne proved to be one of the highlights of the day. A disqualification on the last race of the Mass Rescue meant Whitsand bay took out all three events and the overall 'Ken Mitchell' aggregate trophy. Champagne flowed and other clubs vowed to enter women's teams next year, something that can only help develop the sport further.



Whitsand Bay ladies (with male patients!) celebrate winning the Ken Mitchell trophy

Due to the strong depth of skill and number of teams entered, the overall aggregate men's point score went to Saunton Sands, but when the points from the female events were added Southbourne were tied in equal first place. The rulebook had to be found and following a count back which took the highest number of gold medals into account it was local team Southbourne who were crowned British IRB Champions 2009!



Southbourne SLSC – British IRB Champions 2009

For a full set of results from the British IRB Championships click [here](#).

IRB Officials Course

Thanks to an IRB Officials course run the previous day, the standard of officiating was extremely high over the whole weekend and decisions made fair and measured. The new course was given a big thumbs up by the 25 people who attended including John & Chris Speight from Arancia, NZ the officials sponsors as well as Peter Hallett from North Burleigh SLSC one of Australia's top IRB coaches and competitors. The course will now be run again in other Regions and will continue to ensure that IRB Sport is being developed to a consistently high standard for both competitors and officials alike. Doreen Lawrence the Official IRB Starter commented, "It was great, well worth it and long overdue". However, even a six-hour course couldn't prepare the competitors for Doreen with the starters gun!



'Guns up' – Doreen the starter does her bit

Looking forward to the 2010 season

With a new SLSGB IRB Sport coaching scheme in the pipeline for next year as well as an increase in regional IRB Sport events, 2010 promises to be the start of a new era in this exciting aspect of Life Saving Sport. Another European Event is being planned to coincide with the British IRB Champs, which will immediately precede the World IRB Champs, held as part of Rescue 2010 in Egypt.

If your club hasn't got an IRB yet don't worry, coaching can still be provided and you won't need an IRB to compete at the British IRB Champs or the World IRB Champs next year. Contact irbsport@slsgb.org.uk to register your interest in being kept up to date on IRB Sport Coaching and Officials courses as well as IRB event information.