

25 Aug 23

## Runners and Riders

### Noble Marine RS800 Nationals 2023 @ Brightlingsea Sailing Club 7-10 September

As we hurtle towards the end of Summer (yes that's right, Summer happened apparently) and the impending royal rumble on the East Coast, it is time to take a look at those who will be doing battle. With Tom Morris on dad duties the reigning champions are not there to defend their crown and so in come the hungry pretenders looking to take the throne. It looks like it will be one of the most open National champs that we've had for a long time.

**Luke and Emma McEwen:** Multiple championship winners and absolute legends of the class. Luke and Emma will surely be the favourites to take home the title given the absence of their arch nemesis. Particularly dangerous in the lighter stuff, Luke and Emma have repeatedly shown the fleet a clean transom over the years and disappeared over yonder horizon. However, and it's a big however, we have news of a dodgy shoulder and some last minute remedies to get it working. I'm pretty confident the McEwens could still take this home with three arms but we will see.

**Ben Palmer and Dicken Maclean:** Ben's training for this year's Nationals has included a full blown epic round the Fastnet Rock. He is clearly hoping for oceanic swell and long days on the water (preferably nights as well). With Ben undoubtedly still swaying from his stormy jaunt up to Ireland, will Dicken be able to keep Ben's eyes inshore? Easy to spot with their vibrant orange pro-grip and sail markings, it won't be hard to track their progress. Can they build on their third place finish from last year and make the summit, hi-vis and all? Wouldn't bet against it.

**Monique Vennis-Ozanne and John Mather:** The early pace setters from this year's tightly fought open at HISC. Monique and John surprised everyone with incredible speed in the lighter stuff on the Saturday and will be ones to watch if things stay ouchy-crouchy-crotch. Did you know that they won the 2019 Bloody Mary together (242 boats)? They are more than capable of getting this done in style.

**Tim Gratton and Arthur Henderson:** So confident in their abilities, these two are backing themselves to wrap up the win in just the weekend. Real talent doesn't do weekdays. Tim and Arthur are actually currently undefeated in their short but sweet RS800 career together. They triumphed at the crazy wind Lymington Open and then dominated the one and only competitive race at our recent training weekend in Swanage. No wonder they've decided to give everyone else a head start.

**Joe Bradley and Hugh Shone:** Will these two have had enough time in the boat together to do serious damage? They won the Weymouth Open in strong breeze but struggled at the lighter HISC Open. If we get four days of twin stringing then these two could lay down a serious challenge.

**David Conlon and Ed Gibbons:** Last spotted at Carnac 2022 where the boys put in a decent shift, can the local lads bring it (the short distance) home? With local knowledge and a vociferous home crowd spurring them on we expect to see some moments of glory from the Brightlingsea boys.

**Leo Wilkinson and Guy Fillmore:** As mentioned, Tom Morris is unable to attend and so Guy has been running auditions for the last couple of months. Leo got the triumphant nod and will have the honour of steering the most race primed vessel around the track. Despite the change we still expect to see 1144 at the really really pointy end. Tom will of course be there in spirit, or at least his soft shackles will be.

**Martin Orton and Ian Brooks:** Currently third in the Rooster National Tour, these two will have the weight of helm sheeters on their shoulders as they look to make this their best Nationals yet. Martin and Ian have gone under the radar slightly despite their rapid improvement in results and will be pushing hard to make this one count!

**Paul and Peter Jenkins:** How many roads must a man walk down before you can call him a man? Probably about the same as the number of facebook messages it takes to get Paul to get his Nationals entry in. Many.. Very capable of making an RS800 go very fast upwind, these two will be hoping to be able to stretch their legs and wave goodbye to the rest of the fleet before we even get onto the downhill.

**Fin Armstrong and Ewan Gribbin:** Would it be an RS800 Nationals without the appearance of two Terminator-like Olympic pathway hopefuls? This year's couple of T-1000s come in the form of Fin and Ewan. They are not going to lack the brains or the brawn but will they know the boat? Yeah they probably do. Damn.

It's going to be tight at the top and we haven't even discussed the big prize...the People's Conch for smashing the social! Don't miss out on what is going to be a fantastic event at a wonderful club. Entries still welcome here: <https://www.rs800.org/championships/index.asp?eid=2344>