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Maynard the joker in the pack at Dun Laoghaire

Sailing

David Branigan

In a comprehensive series that marked his fourth successive victory in his J109, John Maybury on Joker 2 was awarded the overall Boat of the Week trophy at the Volvo Dun Laoghaire Regatta yesterday.

As the top entry under IRC handicap as well, Maybury sailed in the 28-strong Division 1 class and had one of the biggest turnouts of the event.

The overall victory for the Royal Irish Yacht Club skipper comes a month after winning his third successive national championship title at Crosshaven.

Joker 2 is the current Irish Cruiser Racing Association Boat of the Year following a

2016 season that included the Beaufort Cup with an Irish Defence Forces team sailed as part of Volvo Cork Week.

This latest regatta was in marked difference to last month's two events on the south coast that were both breezy affairs and included two days lost to high winds.

Dublin Bay in July and early August is known for light to moderate winds with the challenges faced by Race Management teams, especially towards the outer reaches where winds transition between sea breeze and forecast wind.

The past four days was typical though Friday and Saturday saw the best of the conditions with winds gusting to 20 knots occasionally.

"In fairness to the organisers, they got the regatta away with all races sailed," commented former Olympian Mark Mansfield, tactician on Joker 2. "They did very well with the (weather) hand they were dealt."

Thirty four classes had rac-

ing over the four days including seven national or regional championships. Six course areas were fitted into the bay plus offshore buoys were used for passage races.

The Coastal Class that assembled the biggest turnout in any of the divisions saw 31 cruiser racers start a mixture of two to five-hour courses each day depending on the breeze.

Paddy Gregory's Flashback from Howth YC emerged top boat in the class while George Sisk's WOW! that won this

division two years ago to take the overall prize in 2015 was seventh in the fleet, in spite of a promising race win on Friday. Racing close to Dublin's Sandymount shore, Geoff Power from Waterford Harbour won the 420 Leinster Championship title which was sailed as part of the regatta series.

After placing either first or second all the way to the final race yesterday morning meant the luxury of dropping the eighth and final race altogether thanks to the event discard and head for the slipway to pack-up early.

The biennial regatta also marked the 200th anniversary of Dun Laoghaire's historic harbour and traditional boats were to the fore this year.

These included the Dublin

Bay Water Wags, the world's first one-design dinghy that was first sailed 130 years ago. Guy Kilroy's Swift from the Royal Irish YC won half the nine-race series to hold Cathy MacAleavey — former Olympian and mother of Annalise Murphy — at bay in their 16-strong fleet.

And the three-event match race between Conor Phelan's Jump Juice from the Royal Cork YC and Welsh entry Dark Angel from Swansea saw the visitor take his third title of the season from the Cross-

haven crew.

Meanwhile at the West of Ireland Offshore Racing Association championships held on Inis Mór, Liam Burke's Corby 25 from Galway Bay Sailing Club won five out of six races in Division 1 under

IRC handicap, improving on his 2016 result of second when the event was held in Kilrush.

Division 2 saw John Calan-an and Stonehaven Racing take the honours while Brian Raftery's Gossip with four wins from six races had the edge over WIOIRA Commodore Simon McGibney on Gala Racing in second; both are J24's and will be facing a rematch at next month's national championships in Sligo.

In the White Sails event, Frankie Leonard's Roamer was the clear winner under ECHO handicap with two wins in his eleven-boat class.

There was an entry of 43 boats for the series, held for the first time on the Aran Islands and the fleet was joined by 20 Galway hookers.