

Honda RYA Youth Rib Championship 2008

The Honda Rib championship is an annual competition. Wales has a heat in each region: North, South and West and the winners of each age group then go on to the Final which this year was held at Pembrokeshire Yacht club at Milford Haven.

This year, we decided to do something different.

With engines on boats, there is always a risk that some of the oil or fuel will spill into the water. This causes damage to the marine environment since the oil spreads over a very large area. This film prevents oxygen from getting to the plankton in the water as well as being harmful to aquatic life. Removing it can be difficult and so it is much better to prevent it entering the water in the first place. There are simple things that can be done to prevent spills, such as using a collar on the fuel nozzle to prevent drips. And if there is a small spill, then oil absorbent cloth is a good way to remove it from the boat or the water.

This is the message we want to get across to power boat owners and users, and we felt that the Honda Rib competition was a good opportunity to do this. Not only would the kids themselves become aware of what they need to do, their family, friends and clubs would also get the message. We decided that giving each participant a reusable water bottle was a good place to start. They also all got a copy of our leaflets. We chose a design which would be useful and cool enough for the kids to want to use them.



We knew that more was needed so we got together a spill kit. This wasn't likely to be appreciated by the kids themselves, but would be extremely useful for the clubs. So a spill kit was given to each heats winning club.

For the overall winners, we gave a box of Ecover cleaning liquids. This would be useful for the families of the winners as their support is crucial. It is hoped that by trying these products they may continue buying them and possibly recommend them to friends at their clubs.

This was what we wanted to do, but with limited funds it was going to be difficult. As the final was being held at Milford Haven I approached Chevron and asked them to sponsor the water bottles. This they very kindly agreed to do, and gave The Green Blue a donation to cover some of the cost. I approached Sports Council Wales to see if they would match the funding. This they did, and so with the money we could buy the bottles and the spill kits. The winners' prizes were a problem, but CQuip donated the



Ecover products. I am very grateful for the support we received as we could not have done it without their help.

The South Wales heats were in Cardiff Bay, and were run as part of the Activities weekend. It didn't rain but the weather wasn't good which was a pity. With lots of people around The Green Blue leaflets went to more than just the competitors. The North Wales heat was organised by Offshore Sea School Pwllheli, and was held in Pwllheli Harbour. The weather was appalling, strong

winds and rain, but we still managed to have a great event with some good racing. The last heat for West Wales took place at Pembrokeshire Yacht Club in the bay where we had brilliant weather. With all the heats, the safety boat went round the circuit to put out the marker buoys. It also ensured that any wildlife such as cetaceans had plenty of opportunity to keep well away from the race.

The final took place the same afternoon with the heats winners competing against each other. It was a close run race, but we ended up with two winners who will represent Wales at the UK Final at the Southampton Boat show in September.



Photo: Chris Jeffries



Photo: Alan Dop

The Honda rib competition is a great opportunity for young people to learn the skills of powerboat racing. It takes place in a safe environment with the competitors racing against the clock. It was also a good opportunity to learn about the environmental impact of the sport and what steps can be taken to reduce that impact.

Thanks to everyone at WYA who helped make the events such a success and to Offshore Sea School and Pembrokeshire Yacht Club, and to our sponsors.