**Dutch Boat ‘Rio’ Wins the 38th Three Peaks Yacht Race**

The Three Peaks Yacht Race has been won by a Dutch crew for the second time, with ‘Team Rio’ winning The Daily Telegraph Trophy.

An all Dutch crew, skippered by Joost Van Der Wal, sailed their J120 to victory, with two British fell runners aboard to tackle the 3 peaks of Snowdon, Scafell Pike and Ben Nevis.

Ten teams began the race in Barmouth on June 27th and with strong southerly winds they set fast times for Caernarfon, where the runners disembarked for the first mountain run.

From the outset ‘Team Rio’ disputed the lead with last year’s winners, ‘Wight Rose’. The Reflex 38, skippered by Geoff West has won the race 6 times before, so the Dutch crew, who were all new to the race, had the strongest of opposition, and held their own.

Leaving Caernarfon the two leaders were racing side by side in the passage of the Menai Strait, and after the run to Scafell Pike and back the two boats left Whitehaven together for the final sail to Fort William. It was only on the third night of the race, as they passed through the Inner Hebridan Isles, that ‘Rio’ pulled ahead and their runners completed the Ben Nevis run for the team to win in 66 hours 22 minutes.

Van der Wal, said, *“We never believed we could win it!  We had to take a lot of risks as we knew Wight Rose was so fast.  We blew out one spinnaker and last night had 26 knots of wind on our spare which is 165 square metres of kite! I think we won the race around Luing where we had more boat speed and pulled away, we were making 14.5 knots and surfing some of the time.*

*“We all took a turn on the helm and as a crew know each other well. We met many years ago at university when we were all rowers and had 4 oars on board as we thought rowing would be our strength – but we didn’t use them at all.*

*“It is a really challenging and such a good course in amazing scenery and the whole organisation is fantastic, with all the facilities and the volunteers. What a wonderful race.”*

Wight Rose were not far behind in second place and their runners, Stuart Walker and Alex Pilkington, took the prize for ‘Kings of the Mountains’, with a time for all 3 peaks of 14 hours 07 minutes.

‘The Mercian Regiment’ were the top military team and also won the prestigious Tilman Cup for all round performance by putting 4 of their team onto a summit. This was after one of their runners retired hurt when he finished the Snowdon run, so for most of the race they were a team of 4.

Later finishers had to take to the oars to row through calm conditions for a while, and included a team from the Liverpool Yacht Club, a group of Mountain Rescue volunteers from Cockermouth and a team of colleagues from a legal company. Last to finisher were a group of ocean rowers who got together to enter.

Next year’s race takes place from June 11th and you can find all the reports and photos, and review the satellite tracking of teams on the race website at [www.threepeaksyachtrace.co.uk](http://www.threepeaksyachtrace.co.uk)

Press images are available on request – please email info@threepeaksyachtrace.co.uk

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