



Universal Marina

12 Metre Match Racing Weekend

The 13/14 September saw **Crusader** travel down from the East coast to join **Italia** in a Match racing weekend in the Solent. Richard Matthews (Crusader) was hoping to make it 2-0 following his success on the east coast earlier in the year while Richard Rankin (Italia) was looking for an enhanced performance following the improvements seen in Cowes week.

Saturday brought sunshine and little wind, after a 3 hour postponement the two 12 metre yachts were towed out of Cowes and headed west to a course area -between Beaulieu and Lymington. Race 1 saw Italia win the start forcing Crusader to tack off into less pressure and an unfavourable shift. Italia pulled clear staying in phase to lead comfortably at the top mark. Crusader made gains on the run but it was not enough to catch Italia by the finish.

Race 2 and the breeze had dropped further, Crusader read the conditions better and led off the start line on port with Italia stationary on starboard and unable to tack. The breeze filled in slightly with Italia making a small advance but she could not catch Crusader before the finish.

Day 2 saw the wind swing to the North and the boats headed for Osborne bay. Race 3 saw Crusader lead comfortably off the line and the after-guard kept Italia at bay until a mis-understanding over the course length saw Crusader finish at the end of first run of a two lap course. Crusader conceded the match giving Italia a 2-1 lead. A heavy tide was now running for Race 4, with the wind making any upwind progress slow, it would be a matter of first to the top mark would have the race in the bag. Crusader started to leeward and slightly forward of Italia and were first into the next shift, which saw both boats tack onto port, Crusader sailed a tidy beat to round the top mark first, a tight lay line call in the building tide saw Italia miss the top mark. Crusader sailed downwind to win by half a leg.

With the breeze falling once again, the series was drawn at 2-2. It was a great weekend seeing the magnificent 12 metres duelling in the Solent, and both crews are looking forward to meeting again in 2009.

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