

Emirates GBR still aiming for Grand Final after dramatic day at ITM New Zealand Sail Grand Prix



- Racing resumed in Christchurch on Sunday after Day One of the ITM New Zealand Sail Grand Prix was cancelled due to dolphins on the course
- Home team New Zealand was victorious in front of a crowd of 11,000 spectators
- Emirates GBR would have finished in fifth position had they not been issued penalty points after practice racing collision



New Zealand has reigned victorious at their home event after a weekend of delays, drama and dolphins. Emirates GBR finished the event in seventh place, but it would have been fifth had they not been handed penalty points for a [collision with Spain during practice racing on Friday](#). They finished the three fleet races with a 4-3-8 result.

The ITM New Zealand Sail Grand Prix was condensed into one race day, after Saturday's action was [cancelled due to prolonged dolphin activity](#) in the racecourse area. What Race Day One lacked in action, Race Day Two certainly made up for, with chaos and collisions on the racecourse. As the 10 teams prepared for the start of Race One, there was a three-way collision involving ROCKWOOL Denmark, Canada and the United States. The Danish team sustained damage to their bow but all three teams continued to race.



As the race began, France steamed through the fleet to cross the start line first and lead the pack to mark one. Emirates GBR had a solid start and were at the top of the fleet, avoiding the chaotic congestion at mark one that led to disaster for Australia. Aussie Driver Tom Slingsby had to make a sudden turn to avoid Canada and crashed into a race marker, causing severe damage to their F50 which rendered them out of action for the rest of the event.



France continued to lead until the home team New Zealand pulled some great manoeuvres to get ahead of Quentin Delapierre's crew and take the win in the first race of their home event, keeping the Kiwi crowds happy. France came in second, followed by Spain and then Emirates GBR in fourth.



In Race Two, Emirates GBR was third across the start line, behind Switzerland and Canada. On leg three, The Brits put on a sterling performance and managed to overtake both teams to get into first position, what followed was a flip-flopping of first and second position with Phil Robertson's Canadian team. Diego Botin's Spanish crew then got into the mix, and it was a close race to the finish line between the three teams. Canada managed to secure the win, with Driver Phil Robertson stating: "I think I just became the favourite Kiwi" as he crossed the finish line. Spain finished in second, followed closely by Emirates GBR in third.



In the third and final fleet race of the day, France took the win, with New Zealand in second and Canada in third. Those three teams then battled it out in the three-boat final, with Peter Burling's Kiwi crew sealing the deal for a home event win, with the crowd of 11,000 people on their feet as they crossed the finish line.



Emirates GBR Driver Giles Scott said: "It was a pretty big day out there and it looks like we won't be the only ones to come away from this event with penalty points. The Aussies have some pretty major damage and Denmark were sailing with part of their bow missing, so there was lots of carnage which luckily we were able to avoid today.

"We came away with a seventh overall, which would have been fifth without the penalty

points we picked up on practice day. Generally, we had a good day today and we were sailing well in the first two races so it was a little frustrating to slip back in that last fleet race. We got ourselves in some good positions out there, we made a couple of errors but those are pretty easily fixed.

“Our aim is still to make the Grand Final in San Francisco in July, that’s not going to be easy but we will take every race as it comes and we’re looking forward to the next event in Bermuda in May.”

UK viewers can watch all the action from Race Day Two on a [delayed broadcast on ITV4](#) at 01:00 GMT on 25 March.