



# News Release

26 May 2020

## LINCOLN'S NICK STEELED FOR NATIONAL eSAILING CHAMPIONSHIP SHOWDOWN



A talented Lincoln sailing teen will represent Hykeham Sailing Club and the Midlands region on the National stage as he swaps the water for virtual reality in the Grand Final of the RYA eSailing Spring Club Championships this Saturday (30 May).

Nick Welbourn, 17, clinched his place in the National Final after first winning Hykeham's own eSailing Club Championships to qualify for and then take the Midlands Club Championship title in a virtual head-to-head against 20 of the region's top eSailors almost two weeks ago.

eSailing has been the salvation of the country's sailing fanatics during lockdown, with Hykeham SC one of some 325 clubs nationwide who have been running regular Virtual Regattas to keep their members engaged and entertain while off the water. The RYA eSailing Spring Club Championships - organised by sailing's national governing body - was launched to give these eSailors the chance to test their competitive mettle at and beyond their club.

On the water, Nick spent the winter training as part of British Youth Sailing Laser Radial Youth Squad having competed at the 2019 Laser Radial European and World Championships in Athens and Canada. Now, he is relishing the chance to put his new online skills to the test against the other regional champions.

He said: "I initially got into eSailing at the start of the lockdown as a bit of a coping mechanism for not being able to get on the water every weekend as normal. Hykeham's Sunday virtual club racing has been super-competitive.

"In addition, a few of guys from the Radial squad and I started doing some virtual team racing and we had such a good time we even organised our own event where we ended up

with sailors from the UK, Portugal, Netherlands and Japan competing. I think the fun variety of eSailing has really improved my strategic and tactical thinking.

"It's been so much fun it kept me wanting to do more and more. I hope in the future, whenever real racing on the water can resume, the eSailing might help my sailing going forwards. I definitely don't think I'll be walking away from the eSailing entirely when the normal racing resumes."

Aimed at everyone from expert sailors to newbies, eSailing brings the excitement of small sailboat racing into the home. Around 6,000 people in the UK have been hooked on virtual regatta racing to get their lockdown sailing fix.

Hykeham hosted their first virtual regatta on Sunday 5 April and then weekly on the same day and time as their normal club racing. Each session involves four races, which takes around an hour, with up to 12 Hykeham members of all ages taking to the start line every week. Nick has now taken over running these races too.

Zoe Ashley, Hykeham SC Commodore, continues: "eSailing has certainly helped keep members in touch with each other and satisfy that competitive streak. It was clear from the start those who win club racing trophies had the edge in eSailing too!

"We are proud to have Nick represent Hykeham SC. He is an active member of the club, helping on open days and on the General Committee. He is an inspiration to our junior sailors and we all wish him the very best of luck in the RYA eSailing Spring Club Championships National Final."

Nick's sailing passion was sparked at Hykeham a decade ago, when he used to sit on the front of a Topper dinghy as his mum took him for a spin around the lake. His next focus is to move from the Youth-level Laser Radial class into the Olympic-class Laser Standard.

Anyone can give eSailing a go. The game is free to play for individuals and easy to access - [click here](#) or download the Virtual Regatta App on a smartphone or iPad, and click 'play now' on either the inshore or offshore game. If you want to compete and keep your score, create a login and a user profile. The RYA also has a wealth of information to help everyone – from beginners to experienced sailors alike. Visit [rya.org.uk](http://rya.org.uk) for more information.

**ENDS**

**PHOTOGRAPHS:** Download high res image – strictly for editorial use only.

- Nick Welbourn will represent Hykeham SC and the Midlands region at the RYA eSailing Spring Club Championships National Final on Saturday 30 May - [https://www.dropbox.com/s/8zdn7tmxb149d6r/NickWelbourn\\_Photo%20credit%20Melvyn%20Prior%20BBC%20Radio%20Lincolnshire\\_hi.jpg](https://www.dropbox.com/s/8zdn7tmxb149d6r/NickWelbourn_Photo%20credit%20Melvyn%20Prior%20BBC%20Radio%20Lincolnshire_hi.jpg) (credit Melvyn Prior/BBC Radio Lincolnshire)

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## **About the RYA**

- The RYA is the national body for dinghy, yacht and motor cruising, all forms of sail racing, RIBs and sportsboats, windsurfing and personal watercraft and a leading representative for inland waterways cruising.
- The RYA is recognised by Government, the media and opinion formers as the representative body and voice for the activities that it represents. It continually fights for the rights and freedoms of its 112,000 personal members.
- The RYA has more than 1,500 affiliated clubs and classes, which represent some 350,000 boaters throughout the UK. It is estimated that 4 million people in the UK take part in boating activity annually.
- The RYA also sets and maintains recognised standards for training for both leisure and commercial boating through a network of more than 2,400 RYA Recognised Training Centres across 58 countries. More than 270,000 people per year complete RYA training courses.
- The RYA is responsible for one of the UK's most successful Olympic medal winning sports. Our coaching and development schemes actively support 800 of our country's top sailors, from talented juniors to Olympic and World champions.
- The RYA is committed to promoting all forms of boating and making them accessible to everyone. For more information please visit [www.rya.org.uk](http://www.rya.org.uk)