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Jolly Roger: Craig on fire in Italy

IRELAND'S Roger Craig made an excellent start in the preliminary stage of the Imperia Winter Regatta in Italy, with the initial points win in the Laser Class.

The host nation's Giacomo Bottoli won the opening race with Craig in second slot in the 14-nation fleet.

However, both seemed to put themselves out of the running with a sixth and a ninth in Race 2.

Bottoli then got himself back in the frame with another win in Race 2, while Craig was back in sixth.

However, a deterioration in the weather suited the Irish helm and Craig revelled in the difficult sailing conditions to register five wins in a line, while Bottoli had a couple of seconds, and third fourth and fifth, keeping him in second overall ahead of Lithuania's Laurynas Rimsas.

Meanwhile, the Crosshaven club has named its two "Boats of the Year", Frank and Mike McCarthy's Humphreys 35 Checkmate, and Dave Dwyer's Mills 39 Mariners Cove.

Checkmate took her prize for being an effective performer right across the board, while Mariners Cove receives the Doyle Trophy for the best showing on the international scene, an evocative reminder that the RCYC's own great Denis Doyle with Moonduster was a major figure in European offshore racing for more than 30 years.

WM Nixon

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