

June 18, 2015

82 JUNIOR SAILORS FROM 9 NATIONS READY TO SET SAIL IN THE 23RD INTERNATIONAL OPTIMIST REGATTA

St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. Eighty-two 8- to 15-year-old junior sailors will set sail in the 23rd International Optimist Regatta (IOR), June 19 to June 21. Nearly all of these sailors sharpened their skills earlier this week in the pre-regatta Sea Star Clinic, while 12 teams raced in today's Sea Star Team Racing Championships. A week of high caliber racing plus sailors representing 9 nations – Antigua, the British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Curacao, Puerto Rico, St. Barths, St. Lucia, the U.S.A. and all three U.S. Virgin Islands – make the IOR one of the largest youth regattas in the Caribbean.

Seventy-two sailors, both beginning and advanced, trained in the three-day Sea Star Clinic held June 15 to 17. The Clinic was run by top local and international coaches.

“It was very educational and fun to sail with the other sailors and coaches. I really learned a lot. The most important thing I learned was how to find the best spot on the starting line,” says 13-year-old Cas van de Klok, a member of Curacao Youth Sailing, who is attending the IOR for the first time.

Fifteen-year-old Erell Largitte is one of five sailors representing the St. Barths Yacht Club. “I liked the clinic. The coach explained everything very well and really motivated me for the regatta.”

Twelve teams of six sailors each participated in today's Sea Star Team Racing Championships. At the conclusion, it was Team ISV 1, made up of Teddy Nicolosi, Mia Nicolosi, Mateo Di Blasi, Julian van den Driessche, Victoria Flatley and Gillian Perrell, which emerged victorious. The Sea Star Perpetual Trophy will be inscribed with the names of these sailors.

“It was hard sailing against the second place team from the USA and Antigua, but it was a lot of fun too,” says Team ISV 1 sailor, 12-year-old Mia Nicolosi.

USVI national team coach, Agustin ‘Argy’ Resano, says the Sea Star Team Racing Championships were highly competitive. “Racing was very close, but Team ISV 1 finished undefeated through the round robin, semi-finals and finals. Team Racing really instills a sense of team work in the sailors. The transition from Team Racing to Match Racing is not that big and Match Racing is really becoming popular for college and adult sailors, so these junior sailors will be well prepared for the future.”

The 23rd IOR gets underway Friday. The junior sailors, divided into a Green or Beginner Fleet and an Advanced Fleet divided into age groups, White (age 10 and under), Blue (ages 11 and 12), and Red (ages 13 to 15), are expected to complete more than a dozen races over the next three days.

In addition to the hi-caliber racing, shoreside activities included tonight's Parade of Nations and Caribbean Carnival-themed Welcome Party and a beachside barbecue and Awards Ceremony scheduled for 3 p.m. on Sunday June 21st.

Trophies will be awarded to the top five sailors in each fleet and top three overall. Additional trophies include the Peter Ives' Perpetual Trophy, the Chuck Fuller Sportsmanship Award and the top female sailor.

This year's event marks the fourth year that the IOR has taken part in Sailors for the Sea's Clean Regattas program. This program, the only ocean conservation nonprofit focused on the sailing and boating community, encourages regatta participants to recycle all plastic water bottles, use the reusable water bottle provided in goodie bag throughout the regatta, keep all lunch bags and wrapping out of the water and pick up any trash on shore and accept drinks without straws.

Major event sponsors include the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Tourism, Sea Star Lines and the U.S. Virgin Islands Olympic Committee.

For daily results, visit www.styc.net and Regatta Network (www.regattanetwork.com)

For more information, call (340) 775-6320; fax: (340) 775-3600, or Email: internationaloptimistregatta@gmail.com.

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