PRESS RELEASE
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29TH INTERNATIONAL OPTIMIST REGATTA, TOTE CLINIC & TEAM RACE KICKS-OFF THIS WEEK – JUNE 13-19 – ST. THOMAS, U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands. The biggest annual little-boat regatta in the Caribbean kicks off this week. The TOTE Clinic happens Monday through Wednesday, the TOTE Team Race is on Thursday, and the International Optimist Regatta (IOR) runs from Friday through Sunday. A fleet of some one-hundred 8- to 15-year-old sailors from Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and several states in the U.S.A., will compete in an 8-foot long single-sail Optimist in this trio of events. What makes this coming week unique is the combination of instruction, team, and fleet racing, which includes beginners and advanced sailors alike, all in one event.

“We’re pleased to welcome our local, regional, and international sailors, with their family, friends, and coaches to share in the ideal sailing conditions and warm hospitality here in the U.S. Virgin Islands,” says Emily Zimmerman, regatta director and commodore of the host, St. Thomas Yacht Club (STYC). “This event not only provides an opportunity for our young competitors to contest their sailing skills but also to renew and forge new friendships. What’s more, we are proud that in the nearly three decades this event has taken place, several past winners and participants have gone on to excel in the sport. Specifically, our IOR alumni have become high school national champions, college All-Americans, and on the world sailing stage, No. 1 ranked match racers, one-design class world champions, Olympians, and team members of America's Cup campaigns.”



Photo: 2021 IOR Winner Photo, USVI’s Tanner Krygsveld, has aged out of the Optimist, but will be back to help young sailors this year. Credit: Matias Capizzano.

World Class Clinic Coaching

Eleven international coaches, most of whom are national team coaches and all considered among the best Optimist coaches in the U.S. and the World, make the TOTE Clinic as instructive as it is inspirational for the registered junior sailors.

The coaches, in alphabetical order with their affiliations, are Mykel Alonso (Coral Reef Yacht Club, FL, USA), Pepe Betini (Long Island Sound Optimist Team, NY, USA), Jose Arturo Diaz (Club Nautico de San Juan, PR), Mateo Di Blasi (STYC, USVI), Edgar Diminich (Key Biscayne Yacht Club, FL, USA), Bernat Gali (Coral Reef Yacht Club, FL, USA), Kate McDonald (STYC, USVI), Gonzalo Pollitzer (Club

Nautico San Isidro, Argentina), Agustin Resano (STYC, USVI), Manny Resano (California Yacht Club, CA, USA), and Esteban Rocha (Fort Lauderdale Yacht Club, FL, USA).

Two New Awards

Two new annual awards will be introduced this year, one for competitors and the other for coaches.

The Founders Trophy will be awarded to the IOR's top female sailor. It's designed to promote the participation of more young women in this event as well as to honor the IOR's past top female sailors via a name plaque on the perpetual trophy. The Founders Trophy is the brainchild of two of the event's five founders, Henry and Fredelle Menin, who started the IOR in 1993 with fellow co-founders Verian Tuttle, Karen Paige, and the late Bruce Marshall. The IOR's new Founders Trophy is in step with efforts by World Sailing, the sport's global governing body, to promote gender equality in all aspects of sailing.



Photo: Optimists launch from the beach at the host St. Thomas Yacht Club in the 2021 IOR. Credit: Dean Barnes

New this year too is the First Annual Coaches Cup Challenge Opti Race, on Wednesday, June 15, starting at 5 p.m. The fun event's 11 coaches will tuck themselves into an Optimist dinghy and race through the bay. The winning coach gets 100 percent of bragging rights and 50 percent of the proceeds donated to the Optimist program at his or her home club. The other half of the proceeds will support the Optimist program at the St. Thomas Yacht Club. The Challenge is sponsored by the non-profit St. Thomas Yacht Club Foundation.

In other awards, trophies will be awarded to the top five sailors in each fleet: Red (ages 13-15), Blue (ages 11-12), White (age 10 and under), Green (beginners), and top three sailors overall by score. A Perpetual Trophy, introduced in 2017, is inscribed with the overall winner's names from the past 28 years. Additional trophies include the Peter Ives' Perpetual Trophy and the Chuck Fuller Sportsmanship Award. The Sea Star Perpetual Trophy will be inscribed with the names of the sailors on the winning team racing team.

Strong Sponsor Support

New in 2022, winners in the Red (ages 13-15), Blue (ages 11-12), and White (age 10-and under) fleets will receive signature Virgin Islands'-styled Lite Up Watches from Cardow Jewelers, each in coordinated Red, Blue, and White colors. Perfect for junior sailors, the kid-favorite timepieces are water-resistant and feature a silicon band, flashlight, light-up feature, and an outline of all three U.S. Virgin Islands on the face.

The IOR is sponsored by TOTE Maritime, and Cardow Jewelers, K3 Waterproof Gear, Mountain Top, MSI Building Supplies, St. Thomas Restaurant Group, and the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Tourism.

The IOR is sanctioned by the Caribbean Sailing Association.

This year's event will follow an eco-friendly theme. Sailors will be encouraged to recycle all plastic water bottles, use the reusable water bottle in the goodie bag throughout the regatta, keep all lunch bags and wrapping out of the water, pick up any trash on shore and accept drinks without straws.

For more information, call (408) 314-7119, or Email: internationaloptiregatta@gmail.com Or, for the Notice of Regatta (NOR), Results, and other information, visit the St. Thomas Yacht Club website at stthomasyachtclub.org/sailing/regattas/international-optimist-regatta or Regatta Network: www.regattanetwork.com/event/23549.

Please also visit the International Optimist Regatta on Social Media!

ABOUT THE SPONSORS

TOTE. TOTE is a domestic ocean freight carrier headquartered in Jacksonville, Florida, that offers freight services for containerized cargo between the U.S., San Juan, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands. TOTE is the first carrier to operate liquid natural gas (LNG) powered vessels. www.totemaritime.com

U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Tourism. The U.S. Virgin Islands are in the Eastern Caribbean 1,100 miles southeast of Miami, Florida, USA. Each of the three major islands–St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John–possess a unique character of their own. Visitors can enjoy a wide range of watersports as well as immerse themselves in the territory's rich culture by enjoying historical tours, culinary encounters, artisan fairs, parades, storytelling, and other special presentations. www.visitusvi.com

Media contact:
Carol Bareuther
Tel: (340) 998-3650
Email: bareuther@earthlink.net
Skype: Carol.Bareuther

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