

Great sportsmanship during the Offshore Regatta

June 30th 2010-Simpson Bay, St.Maarten-The Sint Maarten Yacht Club's Offshore Regatta took place last weekend with nine boats racing in what one could only deem as horrendous sailing conditions. Competitors started their long journey in St.Maarten on Friday and made their way to Statia for the first leg of the race, continuing on from there on Saturday with a finish in Nevis. Sunday lead all competitors back to St.Maarten in what some might consider the slowest race ever! Despite the lack of wind competitors seemed to have a great time during this event and were reminded of the good old days where races were held for fun and good sportsmanship.

On leg one of the race participants made their way to Statia, not realizing that it would be the very last bit of wind they would see for the coming days. Once in Statia all the boats rafted up together in the Harbor and enjoyed a good time, with a nice quiet dinner and lots of reminiscing about the good old days. Some participants, enjoying the laid back relaxed life of Statia made their way to Smoke Alley for some late night fun.

On leg two of the race from Statia to Nevis, entrant Panic Attack which was skippered by long time sailor Jan van den Eynde , needed a tow from about the halfway point. Bobby Velasquez who was sailing on his vessel L'Esperance was kind enough to lend a hand and bring them into Nevis. This sort of friendly sailing was just the beginning for this event. While in Nevis the local Yacht Club hosted a mini prize giving and participants received prizes for some unique categories.

The most Melodic Boat was won by Leo Lighthard and his crew of Star Chaser who sang harmonious football songs during clearing in at customs. Their prize was claimed only after they sang for their case of Carib beer. The 2nd award went to Bobby on L'Esperance for his good sportsmanship when towing in a competitor. The third prize which was an Ugga horn went to team Panic Attack so that they would have a calling device for Sundays racing. The final prize of the evening went to Ian Hope Ross of Kick em Jenny for the most hangovers, and the case of Carib was greatly appreciated by the crew.

On leg three of what had become the most entertaining regatta of the year saw another tow of Panic Attack by Kick em Jenny for a majority of the race (due to a broken rudder). This gave them ample practice of using their Ugga horn that they had won the night before. Kick em Jenny nearly ran out of fuel while close to St.Maarten making the final hours of the race quite tense for them. Race officers Andrew and Lyn Rapley and the regatta organizers Rob and Petra Gilders flew to each location in their own planes making this a truly multi-vessel event. According to Jan van den Eynde "it is never a dull moment on Panic Attack, I love the long stretches of this race and flying home when there is wind. I have been doing these kinds of races for 20 plus years, and I will definitely participate in this one next year. On Sunday we snapped our rudder which is why it took us almost 10 hours to return to St.Maarten, a trip that would normally take us 5."

The Sint Maarten Yacht Club hosted the final prizegiving on Wednesday evening. First place in the non-spinnaker class went to Garth Steyn and his crew on Pelican Marina Residence, Second place to L'Esperance and third place to Caribella. In the spinnaker class first place went to Kick em Jenny and second place to Panic Attack. The Mulithull class saw Too Rhum Punch come in first, coincidentally this was the only boat to finish the race on Sunday. Second place went to Katzenellenbogen skippered by Robbie Ferron and third place went to Leo Lighthart on Star Chaser.

This event has become an annual race on the Sint Maarten Yacht Club calendar and should anyone want to participate next year, please contact info@smyc.com for more information.

SPECIAL Thanks go to:

Statia:

Glen and Michele Faires of Golden Rock Divers for letting us use their Dive Boat for the starts and finishes - and for having a dinghy service available (But it seems that everyone preferred to raft up along the harbour wall!)
Dominique and Wouter of the Old Gin House for organizing the BBQ / breakfast / accommodation and Ice
Laura Piechutski of Kingswell Resort for seeing to accommodation.

Nevis:

Deby Wallace - for taking care of all the organizing in Nevis.
From having Customs and Immigration stationed at Oualie Beach Resort for our convenience - dinghy service - band at dinner - the 'Special Prizes' (Nevis brewed Carib Beer) - to ice in the mornings. Organizing boats to take us to lay the marks.....to having fuel available..... Deby truly made the stopover in Nevis fantastic fun!
Alistair Yearwood - Commodore of the Nevis Yacht Club - for being a great MC!
Faith Bertie of Oualie Beach Resort for taking care of the meals and accommodation.

St. Maarten

Andrew & Lyn Rapley and Rob& Petra Gilders - the Jet Set Race officers!!
Jan van den Eynde for his help with the courses.
Heather Tackling for writing the Press Release....and Rodney Tackling for caretaking the Bar at Prizegiving.
Delphine Smith for the delicious snacks at Prizegiving!!