

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Race Day Triumphs Illuminate St. Thomas International Regatta's Golden Anniversary

A day of high seas drama and celebratory reflections marks a milestone year for the esteemed regatta

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The St. Thomas International Regatta, now in its landmark 50th year, saw a dramatic day of racing that captivated sailing enthusiasts and competitors alike.

Leading the pack in the 15-boat division after the first day's windward-to-leeward races in Jersey Bay was Bill T, skillfully skippered by Cy Thompson of St. Thomas. However, the event wasn't without its challenges; veteran sailor John Foster, at the helm of Desperado, an IC24 One-Design, faced setbacks with a collision in the second race and a mainsail

crash in the fourth, placing them just above the bottom of the rankings.

The competition also shone a spotlight on emerging talent and seasoned skippers across various classes. ShotGunn made a remarkable recovery, clinching the top position in the CSA Spinnaker Racing 1 group, narrowly outpacing Flying Jenny. In the CSA Spinnaker Racing 2 group, Apollo, led by Donald Nicholson of the USA, celebrated three first-place finishes, showcasing the high level of competition and skill present at the regatta.

The regatta's inclusive spirit was further highlighted by the performance of Bravissimo in the CSA 3 group. Despite finishing the day at the bottom, skipper Mike Feierabend from St. John was optimistic, praising the efforts of his young crew member, high schooler Cruz Lonski. Leading this group was Exodus, a Melges 24 helmed by Puerto Rico's Keki Figueroa, demonstrating the diverse and competitive field.

At the heart of this year's regatta is the celebration of its evolution from its inception as the Rolex Cup Regatta. When Rolex first sponsored the event in 1974, it marked a pivotal moment, transforming the local competition into a global attraction, according to John Foster, a participant for all 50 years. This sponsorship was a magnet that drew race boats from around the world to St. Thomas, significantly contributing to the regatta's growth and its status in the international sailing community.

Today, the St. Thomas International Regatta stands as a testament to the enduring appeal of competitive sailing and the unity it fosters among participants from various backgrounds.

Racing in the St. Thomas International Regatta continues Saturday and Sunday from 11 am.