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31st International Optimist Regatta Sets Sail in St. Thomas

Over 100 young sailors converge for a week of competitive racing and clinics, with eyes on upcoming North American Championships

Sports / **Published On June 10, 2024 08:23 AM /**

Staff Consortium **June 10, 2024**

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The 31st International Optimist Regatta (IOR) has officially commenced this week, showcasing an array of sailing talents among young enthusiasts. The St. Thomas Yacht Club (STYC) hosts this vibrant event, beginning with the TOTE Clinic from June 10 to June 12, followed by the TOTE Team Race on June 13, and culminating in the regatta from June 14 to June 16.

V.I. Dept. of Tourism Commissioner Joseph Boschulte expressed his enthusiasm for the annual event. "We are thrilled to welcome young sailors and their families to the U.S. Virgin Islands for the 31st International Optimist Regatta," he said. "This event not only showcases the incredible talent of our youth but also brings together a vibrant community from around the world to

experience the natural beauty and hospitality of St. Thomas."

The event features over 100 sailors aged 8 to 15 from the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and various U.S. states. They will compete in 8-foot long single-sail Optimists across a series of races, aiming for top honors in a regatta that has historically served as a stepping stone to advanced sailing competitions, including the Olympics.

This year's regatta is especially significant as it serves as preparation for the upcoming Optimist North American Championships (OPTINAM) scheduled for July 13-20 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. U.S. Optimist National Team members such as Wills Gandy, Cassady Lorentzen, and Alexander Montagu are among the participants, bringing their expertise from competitive events across the U.S.

The regatta's connection to prestigious events like OPTINAM is highlighted by Agustin 'Argy' Resano, USVI National Team Coach. "The IOR is a perfect setup for OPTINAM in Puerto Rico due to the similarities of the venues," noted Resano. He emphasized the unique challenges posed by local sailing conditions, such as navigating through seagrass, which adds a layer of complexity to the sailors' strategies.

The event also includes a robust coaching clinic with notable instructors from around the globe, enhancing the competitive and cooperative aspects of the sport. The TOTE Maritime Team Race adds a team-based dynamic to the week's competitions, fostering camaraderie and tactical teamwork among participants.

Awards and recognitions will be given out on the final day, with trophies for the top performers in different age categories and special awards for sportsmanship and outstanding individual achievements. The event is supported by a host of local and international sponsors, ensuring a well-organized and memorable experience for all attendees.

For more information about the event, participants and enthusiasts are encouraged to visit the St. Thomas Yacht Club website.