

The Virgin Islands Consortium

A Remote Controlled Boat Sport On St. Croix? You Betcha

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ST. CROIX -- Tucked away clandestinely in Bethlehem Park, located on the old sugar mill plantation just east of the National Guard Armory, is an unusual sport: remote controlled boat racing. The niche sport has been played here for well over 50 years, but five years ago an official team was formed, and the games have been growing ever since.

So, what exactly is RC racing? The sport's title speaks directly to its core: small boats, controlled by owners through wireless devices, are launched on a body of water (in St. Croix's case, a pond) and race for several laps. Think of it as the on-water version of [drone racing](#).

Over the weekend, RC racers from the U.S. mainland, Puerto Rico, St. John and St. Croix participated in the first leg of the third annual RC Caribbean Championship. According to St. Croix RC Club President Burton Edney, Jr., the second and third legs will be played in Puerto this June and St. John in August, respectively. From there, the teams take a break and resume the following March, which commences with a trophy presentation.

[Remote Controlled Boat Racing, St. Croix](#)

On Sunday, racers played the final games of the first leg, which prevailed in entertaining event-goers, but failed in attracting a large crowd due to the lack of public awareness. Yet, one should not be led wrong about the sport's impact on tourism. According to Mr. Edney, travelers from the U.S. and Puerto Rico, as well as St. John, had occupied 25 hotel rooms; and restaurants here were catering directly to racers and their helpers over the weekend -- a boon for the local economy and music to the Department of Tourism's ears, whose dollars play a major role in the sport's success.

Aside from the championship games, St. Croix RC Club members play every weekend at the old sugar mill. And while members say they've been trying to raise awareness, they argue that the furtive nature of the location impedes their efforts.

Hopefully, with over 13,000 people viewing a video showing some racing action on The Consortium's [Facebook platform](#) as of writing, awareness problems will be less of a, well, problem.

Feature Image: A St. Croix RC Club member holding up a winning boat.

Image Credit: VIC.