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Major St. Thomas Regatta Back Today for 49th Time

Sports / **Published On March 24, 2023 05:43 AM /**

Staff Consortium **March 24, 2023**

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L to R: Flying Jenny, Final Final and Blitz at the start of CSA Spinnaker Racing 1's Round the Rocks Race. Credit: Dean Barnes By. STIR

The 49th St. Thomas International Regatta (STIR) starts today, with almost 50 yachts registered to take part in the 3-day activity.

“We are delighted to welcome all of our sailors to our 49th annual St. Thomas International Regatta,” said Pat Bailey, STIR co-director. “With a forecast for ideal Caribbean sailing conditions...we are looking forward to a fantastic weekend of sailing.”

As a precursor to regatta events, over a dozen yachts participated in Thursday's “Round the Rocks” race, contending with sun, squalls, and winds of up to 20 knots as crews steered counter-clockwise around St. John. Flying Jenny, a Cape 31 from the USA, had the winning time in the

CSA Spinnaker 1 class – 3 hours, 7 minutes, and 52 seconds – while the USVI/Puerto Rico-based Chili Pepper, a modified Beneteau First 10, came in first in the CSA Spinnaker 2 class.

“We kept the land on the left and kept the rocks tight,” said the Flying Jenny’s tactician Josie Gliddon, following the crew’s win. “There was more current than we expected. In the first half of the race there was flat water, then the second half it was all about flying in clear air.”

Gliddon said that conditions in the Caribbean made the region a “great training ground” for the Flying Jenny’s relatively new team.

Meanwhile Bastian Sarh, owner of the Chili Pepper, said that as in previous years, the crew tried to improve their sailing skills. “Since our boat doesn’t do well in the chop, our strategy was to stay closer to shore and that worked.”

Sarh noted the idyllic setting of the race. “Overall, we had a wonderful time. The weather was fantastic. And it was beautiful. After all, it was St. John.”

This year’s STIR will culminate on Sunday March 26, 2023.

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