



Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez – Saturday 28 September - Sunday 6 October 2024

Monday 30 september 2024

Showtime for the Modern and Maxi yachts

Wind ahoy, at last! After some very light conditions initially for the Modern yachts and a more established breeze at Pampelonne for the Maxis, who experienced highs and lows throughout the afternoon... patience and concentration were the order of the day, with some very evenly matched races enabling everyone to compete in their own categories for this first day of action at Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez.

Patience

On paper, the little zephyr that accompanied the competitors as they exited port this morning was supposed to be absorbed by a thermal breeze moving towards the land, offering a favourable medium breeze and a bracing start to proceedings. However, a thermal is synonymous with sunshine and beneath cloudy skies this morning, the Modern yachts had to sit pretty until they could be released onto the racetrack! Ultimately, it was at 12:40 p.m. that the starting gun let the IRC Bs take the stage. In a little less than 5 knots of breeze, which struggled to establish itself, it was vital to be powered up from the get-go, something that *Blue Carbon* was brilliant at. The Spanish TP 52 left all the rest of the fleet for dust on port tack, though she was caught before the La Moutte mark by *Nanoq*, the TP 52 helmed by King Frederik of Denmark. In these conditions, it took a while to make out which of them were the competing yachts and those awaiting their start in the smaller classes! In general, each category made for the line abeam of the Portalet tower and at 1:10 pm the four groups set sail onto coastal courses. Spanning 19 miles for the biggest boats, 15 for IRC C, D and E, no speed records were likely to be set today...

Impatience

Meantime, at noon in the bay of Pampelonne, the breeze was much more established than at the heart of the Gulf of Saint-Tropez, resulting in the first spectacular

windward-leeward race for the Maxi As. Overly impatient, *Black Jack 100* was a little too rushed at the windward mark. Powered up on port tack, the biggest of the IRC ratings for the Maxis was forced into a big bearaway to let the horde of boats on starboard tack slip by in what was a very hotly contested match at the front of the fleet.

Whilst Classes A and B strutted their stuff on these very compact courses, the smallest Maxis (classes C and D) set sail on a coastal course bound for Cavalaire. Amongst these two classes were a number of past winners of Les Voiles. There was also some disparity on the menu too with the 25-ton *Stella Maris*, reigning champion in Maxi D, up against the 16-ton *Bambo*, which are a size match! A world apart, the duo is able to set sail on the same start line thanks to the IRC measurement. This same measurement also allows recent models to compete against vintage Maxis like the Swan 65, which can be formidable at times. In fact, one of the latter, by the name of *Six Jaguar*, took victory in today's Trophée BRIG race. NB: this Swan 65 is one of four sloop rigs among the 41 boats that make up this legendary series, which enjoyed its heyday as a ketch rig in the Whitbread (*Sayula II* took victory in 1973) and more recently the Ocean Globe Race.

Restart at La Moutte, denouement at Portalet

Shortly after 3 p.m., it was the turn of the first TP 52s to slink across the bay and cross the line at the Portalet tower. The first Modern yacht in elapsed time was none other than *Nanoq*, the reigning champion, but streets ahead in corrected time was the Club Swan 42 *Dralion*. The brand-new *Daguet 5* also got off to a great start. In fact, this Carkeek design, owned by Frédéric Puzin and built in England at Carrington Boats, is making her debut performance on the racetrack at Les Voiles. Very much on the pace, she finished third in elapsed time in the middle of the TP 52 fleet, to which she owes some time...

With the breeze still struggling to establish itself today, the lighter boats generally had the advantage. It was important to be at the front of the pack of course, but you also had to keep an eye on your rear-view mirror in the early afternoon as the breeze dropped away just as the fleet were closing on the La Moutte mark en masse, to the great delight of the photographers. Vying for the Trophée BMW in IRC C, it was one of the four Cape 31s, *Meerblick*, which was first to extricate herself from the treacherous conditions and take the bullet at Portalet. In IRC D (Trophée Suzuki Marine), first prize went to *Expresso*, whilst the legendary *Pride* also sailed a brilliant race to take victory in IRC E.

Among the Maxis, the 72-foot Mini Maxi and reigning champion *Jolt* (formerly known as *Cannonball*), triumphed in category A in the first windward-leeward, followed by Sir Peter Ogden's *Jethou*. Titleholder *Lyra* in Maxi B excelled but *Kallima*, owned by the

Belgian Paul Berger and helmed by Vincent Fertin is hot on her heels. Of particular note, the Swan 82 FD sailed by a crew that forms less than 70% of the maximum size permitted by her IRC certificate, is benefiting from an 18-second bonus per hour of racing. This relaxation of the IRC measurement allowed by the IMA (International Maxi Association), proved very appealing in today's light airs.

Finally, a quick word about the Maxi C class: *Wallyño*, helmed by Benoit de Froidmont, took the win this Monday, bringing the number of victories for the reigning champion to four!

The Tofinous will enjoy their own ranking

Twelve Tofinous (including nine 950s) are signed up in the Modern category at Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez. Taking their start with the IRC E fleet, these modern yachts with a classic vibe will finally boast their own dedicated ranking.

Up next...

Tomorrow, it's the same again in terms of the weather forecast and the start timings: 11 a.m. for the Modern yachts at Portalet and 12 noon for the Maxis at Pampelonne.

However, the Classic yachts will also hit the racetrack tomorrow, at noon at Portalet.

In the meantime, from 6:30 p.m. this evening, the Pashgang band are setting the tone for the musical entertainment in the village, whilst the Phacochères will be performing in port...

PROGRAMME for LES VOILES DE SAINT-TROPEZ 2024 (details of the programme on shore can be viewed on the event's website)

Saturday 28 September: Registration for Maxis (over 18.28m), Classic and Modern yachts up to 18.28 metres.

Sunday 29 September: Registration for Maxis (over 18.28m), Classic and Modern yachts up to 18.28 metres. Arrival of the YCF Autumn Cup (Cannes – Saint Tropez)

Monday 30 September: Regattas for Modern and Maxis yachts

Tuesday 1 October: Regattas for all fleets

Wednesday 2 October: Regattas for Modern and Classic yachts Day Off for the Maxis and Club 55 Paul Watson Maxi Yachts Cup

Thursday 3 October: Challenge Day and Club 55 Paul Watson Cup for Modern and Classic yachts, Centenarians' Regatta YC Gstaad Trophy, Regattas for Maxis

Friday 4 October: Regattas for all fleets

Saturday 5 October: Regattas for all fleets. Prize-giving ceremony for the Maxis

Sunday 6 October: Prize-giving ceremony for Modern and Classic yachts

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