



Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez 2020 – from Saturday 26 September to Friday 9 October
Monday 28 September 2020

Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez: a fast and famous start!

- The Modern craft revel off Portalet: *Daguet2*, *Spirit of Malou* and *Andante 4* already proving themselves
- Tomorrow, Tuesday, the Classics hit the racetrack

Over to the sport! And what a way to go! The bay of Saint Tropez was decked out in all her finery today in a strong breeze, azure skies, glorious sunshine and navy-blue seas, providing the perfect backdrop for the 85 Modern yachts invited to kick off the action at Les Voiles in its new formula. From 11:00 hours, the largest boats in the IRC B and IRC C classes set sail together in a bracing NW'ly wind of over 25 knots along a 19-mile technical course skirting the edge of the bay. They were immediately tailed by three other competing groups, which gathered together the cream of the racer-cruisers measuring 10 to 13 metres, famous for absolutely killing it on all the famous race zones. This packed day of close-contact sport, at every point of sail, saw the breeze pick up to 28 knots and already the star players are making their presence felt. However, if the whimsical wind gods decide not to play ball tomorrow and offer up some radically different wind conditions, the hierarchy could well be turned on its head.

The perfect day!

As the racers from the Modern category of Les Voiles inaugurated the new event formula today, they could not conceal their delight. Indeed, they were able to enjoy the treat of crossing the start line off Portalet, a spectacle which is usually reserved for the classic yachts. With no clearance buoy in the bay for safety reasons the craft are able to thunder downwind to the sea walls surrounding Saint Tropez. After a prudent start with the wind gusting to over 25 knots, each crew left themselves plenty of room at the start to choose which side of the racecourse to favour before becoming embroiled in some close-contact and fiery tactics. Particularly incisive out on the water, the 11 to 13-metre IRC C boats, which are competing for the BMW Trophy, put on a cracking show, with several leader changes amidst the frenzy of gybes. Belgian Bernard Marchand's Swan 42 *Andante 4* is clearly on a roll and has bagged a much deserved first place on the provisional podium. The Swiss Club Swan 50 *Mathilde M*, winner in elapsed time, has had to contend with third place this evening, behind Giovanni Di Vincenzo's Ker 46 *Lisa R*. Meantime, it comes as no surprise that Frédéric Puzin's *Daguet2* has taken the lead in IRC B. Going right to the wire, the fabulous Mylius 50 was only beaten in elapsed time after two and a half hours of fierce fighting by the JP54 *The Kid* helmed by Jean Pierre Dick, now trailing slightly in corrected time.

Conditions fit for a TP 52!

With four boats ranked in 16 minutes, the 52-footers were really on fire in these ideal TP 52 conditions. Stéphane Nevé has put together a dream team aboard *Spirit of Malou* and will be going all out to take ultimate victory at this event despite some seriously stiff opposition. Figaro sailors Alexis Loison, Anthony Marchand and the Château brothers are just some of the big names who excelled in today's breezy conditions, linking together some long beats

and downwind sprints under large spinnaker at over 20 knots. They're obviously ready for anything the weather decides to throw at them this week...

The Classics, tomorrow!

The much-loved classic yachts will hit the race zone of Saint Tropez tomorrow. Split into 7 separate groups according to their size and rig type, yachts measuring under 24 metres will feature in this week's races. From the metre rule classes measuring 8m and 12m, to the Bermudan sloops, the gaff-rig cutters, the ketches and the yawls, there is something for everyone at Les Voiles. Of particular note is the Epoque Aurique (Period Gaffers) group, where six exceptional craft will vie for the highly coveted Rolex Trophy throughout the week. *Viola*, a Fife-designed jewel from 1908, which has really cut a dash over recent seasons at the major Mediterranean meets, ranks as one of the favourites with her honed crew of friends who are well-versed in the yacht's subtleties. She'll be up against her familiar sparring partners, *Esterel* (Sibille 1912), *Lulu* (Rabot 1897) and *Nin* (Quernel 1913).

Today's partner: BMW

A manufacturer of cars, motorbikes, bicycles and electric scooters, BMW has partnered Les Voiles for the past 13 years where it often debuts some of its vehicle ranges for general public test drives. This year, the BMW Trophy will reward the best boat in the IRC C category, a class geared towards racing and hence perfectly reflecting BMW's involvement in the racing car arena. Karine Drira-Rogez, head of BMW's event publicity:

"BMW partners numerous sailing competitions and we share a number of values, ethics and philosophies with this sport, as well as its ecological approach, since BMW is committed to increasingly eco-friendly development. Saint Tropez is also a must for our clients who are passionate about sailing and cars. We're very happy that Les Voiles, one of the finest nautical events around, has been able to be organised this year. We've managed to set up a public access test centre with 9 vehicles through until 4 October. Only just debuted in Monaco last week, the new BMW M4 Coupé can also be viewed here, while the M 1000RR motorbike with its series of highly unique features is making its world debut at the show. Loïck Peyron is still our ambassador as a genuine link between the technological world of sailing and the automobile."

2020 programme:

Week 1: Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez

Saturday 26th and Sunday 27th September: registration for boats up to 20 meters (except for certain classes)

Monday 28th September: racing for modern yachts

Tuesday 29th, Wednesday 30th September, Friday 2nd, Saturday 3rd October: racing for modern yachts and classic yachts

Thursday 1st October: Challenge Day

Saturday 3rd October: prize giving (week 1)

Week 2: Les Voiles Super Boats

Sunday 4th and Monday 5th October: big boat registration (Wally, IRCA, Maxi yachts, big Classic, big Schooner)

Tuesday 6th, Wednesday 7th, Thursday 8th, Friday 9th: big boat racing

Friday 9th October: prize giving (week 2)

The measures set out by the Société Nautique de Saint-Tropez (outside the plan for competitors):

Staff and volunteers

- Screening of all the contributors before and during the event

Les Voiles Village

- Slimming down of the village to 400m² (instead of the usual 1,500m²), maximum of 400 people

- Exhibitors' spaces limited to partners. Access to the official North Sails boutique will solely be from the outside.

- Wearing of a mask, temperature check at the entrance and hand sanitising gel: compulsory

- Collaboration with the Cerballiance laboratory to screen those wishing to undergo testing.

- Entertainment: The traditional boules (bowling) competition, crew parade, crew festival and sardine feast will not be able to be hosted this year.

Media

- Remote registration formalities, no press office, contact with the press office via email, text or telephone only.

For embarking aboard a boat : negative test within 72 hours, wearing of a mask compulsory, meeting point for boarding the boats dockside.

Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez's partners.

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CHAMPAGNE BESSERAT DE BELLEFON

EAUX 808

SUZUKI MARINE

MERCANTOUR EVENT

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PORT DE SAINT-TROPEZ

LES MARINES DE COGOLIN

FEDERATION FRANCAISE DE VOILE (FRENCH SAILING FEDERATION)

YACHT CLUB DE FRANCE

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