



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

**Friday 4 October 2024**

### **Les Voiles, version pianissimo**

**Having launched no fewer than seven starts in the gulf with visibility fast disappearing, the three Race Committees ruling at Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez opted to send the crews back to port after running out of their favourite fuel, the breeze.**

**The perfect opportunity then to focus on tomorrow's action, delve into the provisional overall ranking on the eve of the final day of racing and stroll along the quaysides chatting to enthusiasts of Les Voiles, who would not have missed this race meet for all the world**

#### **“Low wind but great win!”**

A familiar sight among regatta sailors, the 'Answering' pennant fluttered for quite a while on the Committee boats this morning, waiting for the wind to get into position so they could launch the start procedure for the Modern yachts, before losing its head as the Classic yachts set sail. It was the same scenario among the Maxis off Les Salins... Tossed about in the swell, the 250 crews patiently bided their time and at 14:25 hours, after consulting with the Principal Race Officer Georges Korhel, the decision was taken to cancel play.

At that very moment, the news came in about *Ineos Britannia's* victory in the Louis Vuitton Cup. Needless to say, that the beer will be flowing this evening, particularly among the British crews competing at Les Voiles, as they celebrate their nation's qualification as challenger to the New Zealanders in the 37th America's Cup. “Low wind but great win!” sums up today's action for Sir Peter Ogden. On his return to the dock this evening, the owner-helm on the Maxi *Jethou* was all smiles about the British hopes: “Ben (Ainslie) is a guy we know well aboard. He's a friend and he's often sailed with me on *Jethou*. We all had YouTube on our phones as we waited for the breeze to kick in today and once we saw that he'd nailed the start, we knew it was going to be historic.”

### **Maxis: Firm leaders but suspense continues to reign**

With just 4 points in five races and one second place, *Lyra* in Maxi B, competing for the Trophée La Mer, is in the most enviable position because, with just one coastal course to go, she can no longer be caught by *Geist* or *Kallima*, who will be embroiled in a bitter duel for second place tomorrow as there's just one point between them. There is more suspense in Maxi A (Trophée Byblos) for *Jolt*, which has a four-point lead over *Jethou*, the latter posting the most consistent performance of the line-up with five second places.

In Maxi C, where two windward-leewards are scheduled, *Wallyño* number two may still be in with a chance of pulling off the double after her victory in 2013. To achieve this, she'll have to ensure that the leader, *Yoru*, is astern of her as just two points separate them at this stage. Finally, in Maxi D, Trophée BRIG, the British boat *Six Jaguar* has sailed consistently every day since Monday and may well take the win in Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez on her debut performance.

### **Modern yachts: Place your bets!**

As is the case in the Maxi category, the competitors here will be allowed to scratch their worst race if a fourth regatta can be successfully run tomorrow, which is something everyone is pinning their hopes on. If it comes off, there could well be upset on the leader board, especially in IRC B, vying for the North Sails Trophy. Certain boats still in with a chance of a podium finish, like *Blue Carbon* and *Aria*, lament one very poor result in the provisional ranking and might well be able to topple *Dralion* if they can erase them from the record. Just three points separate the top trio and anyone placing sixth and above could still be in with a shout! The same cannot really be said of IRC C, BMW Trophy, where *Meerblick* and *Shotgun* will be the only ones vying for the top spot with just two points between them, a scene mirrored in IRC E with the decisive battle pitting *Flower Power* against *Pride* tomorrow.

In IRC D though, it would take a very poor race from *Expresso*, whose won the first three races, for the JPK 1010 not to be crowned champion. It's a similar scene among the Tofinous with *Team 42* having just nudged ahead in the class which boasts a line-up of nine boats.

### **Tradition yachts: hard to call**

For the Tradition yachts which hit the racetrack on Tuesday, every race will count so it really could be anyone's game, even more so than for the Modern yachts.

In the three largest categories – Classique and Epoque Marconi, as well as Epoque Aurique competing for the Rolex Trophy -, the leaders are tied in the provisional

ranking! The same is true for the IORs, whilst the Big boats *Tuiga* and *Mariska* are just two points apart. It's more of the same in GTR where *Belle Aventure* will have to keep a close eye on *Orianda*. Meantime, among the 12mRs, it is sure to be tricky to dislodge *Crusader* which, like *Flica 2*, has secured two bullets.

### **Close encounters:**

**William Collier: "Restoration is a form of ecology"**

**Every year, the Scotsman goes into his autumn quarters in Saint Tropez where he casts an enthusiastic and expert eye over the classic yachts, which he restores through his company G.L. Watson.**

### **How did you become so passionate about classic yachts?**

I spent my youth immersed in yachting books but the trigger was probably my first Nioulargue. I arrived in Saint Tropez in 1988. *Altair* was there having come out of restoration. I'd never seen *Orion* before either. I was in absolute awe! I grasped the fact that there was a demand for clients interested in restoration who needed information and guidance. I ended up doing a PhD in classic yacht architecture in the UK and I worked at Camper and Nicholsons before purchasing the G.L. Watson agency, which was the first design office devoted to yachting and founded by a naval architect of the same name in 1873. We hold the largest source of archives in this field with nearly 4,000 plans, including that of the Fife collection, and we assist owners with their restoration choices and managing their project.

### **What are the keys to a successful restoration?**

Firstly, you need to find the perfect marriage between the boat and the owner, according to your desires and the means at your disposal. After that, there is a second marriage to organise between the owner and the yard. Once these choices have been made, we draw up the overall plan and the detailed plan. You have to go into great detail to end up with exemplary yachts like *Altair* or the J Class *Endeavour*. It's a form of ecology in the sense that it maintains a whole ecosystem of know-how, with shipwrights, cabinetmakers, riggers, as well as a whole range of small companies highly specialised in casting or metal parts. On a classic yacht, you can have more than 20 contributors of this kind.

### **Are there a lot of boats in the world that need restoring?**

There are fewer and fewer as we've already worked on a lot of them, particularly at the instigation of Eric Tabarly, who invited Fife owners up to Bénodet in north-west France as far back as 1998 for this purpose. That said, there are sure to be some treasures sitting in garages. There are still a few nuggets on the East coast of the States and also in New Zealand, as the boats were built of native hardwoods.

Doubtless there's some sources of exploration in the Nordic lands too where boats are taken ashore in the winter. However, we no longer find big boats of over 20 metres like those which make Les Voiles so magical. You can have a huge amount of fun on small craft too at the same time. I've personally restored two boats, a 25-foot Watson design and a 17-foot Fife from 1894, which has an LOA of 19-feet and carries 75 m2 of sail area! That keeps me happy!

**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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Principal Race Officer : Georges Korhel

Regatta Secretary : Frédérique Fantino

On-the-water logistics : Gilles Doyen

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Internet sites : [www.lesvoilesdesaint-tropez.fr](http://www.lesvoilesdesaint-tropez.fr) ; [www.societe-nautique-saint-tropez.fr](http://www.societe-nautique-saint-tropez.fr)

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