



Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez – Saturday 26 September to Sunday 4 October 2026

2 October 2026

Reckoning hour in the sun

With at least two more wonderful races to be contested between now and Saturday evening, Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez hit the home straight today under skies filled with promise. Following an epic Challenge Day yesterday, all the crews were mindful of the fact that there is no room for error now as the 251 participating boats docked out of the harbour at St Tropez this morning with the traditional musical accompaniment from the lone piper on *Elena of London*. A beautiful sunny day awaited the crews out on the water, to the delight of the huge crowds. This evening, everyone is crunching the numbers to work out what they need to do before the final reckoning during Saturday's racing.

In glorious sunshine, of course

Following on from the centenarians yesterday, this morning it was the turn of the youngsters to steal the show to the tune of the fifes. Indeed, nearly 200 children from three of the local primary and nursery schools paraded around the port in a procession that took them all the way to the Bar des Voiles, where the famous pancake house at La Ponche, Gourmandise, treated them to quite the spread!

The public followed in their footsteps and massed along the Môle Jean Réveille jetty late morning to enjoy the spectacle of all the Modern and Tradition yachts in the starting blocks. In fact, a special mention must go to the legendary schooner *Atlantic*, which skirted the sea wall under full sail to rapturous applause. Those with a keen eye may even have noticed the red pennant sporting the number 64 at the top of the foremast. It is actually an old Dutch tradition dating back to the 18th century, where each captain had a particular number which enabled the operators of the boats to pinpoint which captain was helming which boat. "The sailing schools for classic yacht skippers revived this tradition in the 1990s," explains Fosse Fortuin, the Dutch captain of *Atlantic* since 2018, who previously helmed *Elena of London*. "It is a real honour because the number also means that I'm permitted to make long passages on the boat," adds Fosse, who has certainly made the most of this privilege over the past year. Indeed, since *Atlantic*'s racing debut at Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez in 2025, the schooner spent the winter in the Caribbean, before returning to the Mediterranean via Scotland, where she took part in a special event on the Clyde this summer.

Benefiting from a lovely E'ly breeze of 8 knots, all the classes took their respective starts at 2:00 pm, the Big Boats bringing up the rear putting on a fantastic show off the sea wall. One hour later, as if by magic, a myriad of coloured spinnakers appeared on the horizon, heralding the return of the first Modern yachts into the Gulf of St Tropez.

Modern yachts: place your bets

In IRC 0 competing for the BMW Trophy, the Botin design *Spirit of Lorina*, which is making her season's debut, is leading the way, but the battle for the rest of the podium places is very close between *Arkas Blue Moon*, *Daguet 5*, *Nanoq* and *Interlodge*, just two points apart. However, *Daguet* was a long way off the pace today, signing away her chance of glory in this race. The same could not be said of *Interlodge*, the Botin 44 helmed by her American owner Gwen Fragonen, with Charlie Enright, reigning champion of The Ocean Race calling tactics. The little one of this IRC 0 class competing for the BMW Trophy, she only managed a ninth place in this race, victory ultimately going to *Nanoq*. *Spirit of Lorina* took second after a stellar performance, consolidating her lead in the overall ranking.

In IRC 1, *Zappy* triumphed today, but *Pretexte 2* bagged the top spot in the overall ranking, just one point ahead of *Lisa R*. In IRC 2, *J Wow* proved she was worth her mettle again today with a third place and she remains in a favourable position to take the win in this edition. In IRC 3, *Pride* secured her second race win

and the Jayson-Graves family still have everything to play for against *Topas* tomorrow. In IRC 4, *First Light* excelled and could well snatch the overall lead provided she doesn't make any slip-ups on Saturday.

Tradition yachts: Fleet racing and match racing

"Match racing alone isn't great!" commented Christian 'Kiki' Karcher, crew on *French Kiss*, this morning with his usual cheeky humour. As a result, the fact that *Kiwi Magic* (KZ7) is back in business wasn't all good news for her crew sailed by Danish sailor Mariane Petersen (see below). Indeed, the legendary 12mR helmed by Chris Dickson in the 1987 Louis Vuitton Cup was back in action today but had to bow down to *French Kiss*, which got off to a fabulous start and managed to cover her throughout. The French 12mR is now comfortably positioned at the top of the provisional leader board.

Today's best starts have to be awarded to the New York 40 *Marilee* and the Marconi schooner *Viveka*, which powered through their respective fleets. *Marilee*, currently lying third, could still win Les Voiles and the Grand Tradition category. As for *Viveka*, which bagged victory in the first two races, the Frank Payne design was beaten today by *Tuiga* so we shall have to wait until tomorrow for the verdict.

Among the P Classes vying for the Rolex Trophy, the four-way match continues apace. And it was *Olympian* which triumphed again today. By discarding the five points from her disqualification on day one, the owner of the William Gardner design, Philippe Oddo, sits atop the provisional ranking, but will have to repeat his wonderful performance today to retain his crown and add his name to the Rolex Trophy.

Maxi yachts: A role reversal sees *V* regain the top spot

The Maxi 1s competing for the Trophée Edmond de Rothschild, which had only previously raced on windward-leeward courses, set sail today on a 28-mile coastal course. Meantime, classes 2, 3 and 4, as well as the J Classes, switched over to windward-leewards. The Race Committee spared no effort so that everyone was able to contest two races in what started out as a shifty breeze, before it established itself nicely midway through the afternoon at around a dozen knots.

Among the J Classes, *Svea* made a great comeback to win both races, with an epic final sprint in the second when Niklas Zennström's crew overtook *Rainbow* above the layline before gybing and finishing the race half a boat length ahead on the line!

Amidst the Maxi 1s racing for the Trophée Edmond de Rothschild, *Magic Carpet e* secured her first race victory in elapsed time since her competitive debut at Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez 2025 but finished fifth in corrected time. The big news today is the win for *V*, the Wallycento owned by reigning champion Karel Komarek. She left *Northstar III* for dust almost, in 8th, clearly less at ease on the coastal course than she was in the initial windward-leewards. This evening *V* and *Jethou*, second today, are tied on points so suspense reigns.

The rankings are equally up in the air in the Maxi 3 category between *Why Not* and *Yoru*, which are continuing to monopolise the top spots. In Maxi 2, *Twin Soul B* consolidated and pulled ahead, as did *Blue Oyster* in Maxi 4, second today but with some wiggle room in the overall ranking.

Of note among the smallest Maxis (4), there is a battle royal between the two Swan 65s. The sloop-rigged *Saida* won today's race, while *Evrika* secured third. The latter ketch-rigged Swan 65 is owned by none other than Dominique Dubois, the former boss of the Multiplast yard, who got her safely back to her home port in the Ocean Globe Race (crewed round the world race in the spirit of the Whitbread race) and has Lionel Péan aboard no less, the latter having come along to help out the family crew at Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez.

2026 Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez Schedule

Saturday, October 3: Races for the Maxis, Moderns, and Classics, including the Rolex Trophy. Prize-giving for the Maxis, including the Edmond de Rothschild Trophy

Presentation of the Rolex Trophy

Sunday, October 4: Prize-giving for the Moderns and Classics, including the BMW Trophy and special trophies

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Registrations: Frédérique Fantino
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Logistics and Procurement: Alice Coquant
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