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Epic Week of Racing at Quantum Key West 2013
--- Five Days of Strong Winds Thrill Sailors

Key West, Fla -- It wasn't hard to figure out who the winners were upon conclusion of Quantum Key West 2013. Andrea Pozzi and the Italian sailors aboard Bombarda were passing around bottles of champagne. Jim Richardson and the boys on Barking Mad were drinking a tray full of mudslides. Hearty handshakes and bear hugs were exchanged in the cockpit of Azzurra.

Celebration and jubilation were the order of the day for those teams that captured championships after a challenging week of intense competition. All agreed that winning Key West this year was a particularly stellar accomplishment since it featured some of the most spectacular conditions in the 26-year history of the annual midwinter regatta.

"This is the best feeling I've ever had after a regatta. We've been coming to Key West since 1998 and winning here has long been on our list of goals," said Stephen Murray, skipper of High Performance Class champion Decision. "To me, this is the premier event in North America. Of all the regattas we've won over the years, this one stands out because of the history and tradition. It means a lot to be able to say you won Key West."

Decision captured the High Performance Class following a tremendous battle with sister ship Spookie. Those two Carkeek 40-footers dominated the nine-boat class from start to finish with Spookie leading after the first two days of racing and Decision leading for the final three.

The regatta turned when Spookie, skippered by North Sails professional Steve Benjamin, blew out spinnakers in both races on Wednesday and suffered results of third and eighth. Decision was more consistent and wound up placing first or second in nine of 10 races. Johnny Lovell served as tactician for fellow New Orleans resident Murray, who took the helm after his father got injured on the second day of the regatta.

"It was unbelievably exciting to sail against someone of Benji's caliber, someone I admire and respect so much," Murray said. "I couldn't have scripted this any better if I tried. To win the regatta on the last leg of the last race was really amazing."

Murray said the Decision program couldn't be done without the support of his father, who steered the boat on Monday and Tuesday. Murray reserved special praise for his wife Shelley, who allowed him to attend Key West despite the fact they are in the midst of building a house.

"A lot of credit goes to Johnny Lovell. He was a coach and mentor of mine while I was growing up and it's a huge help to have him onboard making great call after great call," Murray said.

Decision and Spookie finished with 19 and 20 points, respectively, while the third place boat in High Performance class had 44 points. That was Chessie Racing, skippered by George Collins (Miami Beach), which settled for victory in the Farr 400 One Design class.

It's been a bare knuckle fight in IRC 2, the 52 Class, which had four different boats win races over the course of the week. Azzurra got off to a tough start, hooking a crab pot and finishing last in Race 2 then committing a penalty and placing fourth in Race 3. However, the Latin team consisting primarily of Italians and Argentinians found its sea legs and wound up placing first or second in seven of 10 races to total 24 points, five better than runner-up Interlodge.

Continued...

"We are really happy. It has been a fantastic week of sailing with incredible conditions," Azzurra skipper Guillermo Parada said. "We made some mistakes early in the week, but once we settled down we started sailing very well."

Italian professional Vasco Vascotto, an America's Cup veteran, served as tactician aboard Azzurra and was instrumental to the victory. Owner Alberto Roemmers, from Buenos Aires, sailed on the boat all week as part of the crew.

"Vasco is one of the world's best tacticians, but truthfully the whole crew did terrific work. As a team, we made less mistakes than the rest of the fleet," Parada said.

Interlodge had a terrific final day, posting a first and second to jump from fourth to second in the overall standings, earning the Quantum Boat of the Day honors in the process. Tactician Marty Kullman said the strong finish was a major step forward for the program fielded by Austin and Gwen Fragomen (Newport, RI).

Barking Mad took over the lead in Farr 40 class on Tuesday and held it the rest of the way despite stiff competition from Flash Gordon (Helmut Jahn, Chicago) and Struntje Light (Wolfgang Schaefer, Lueneburg, Germany). It marked the third Key West victory for Richardson (Newport, RI), who had America's Cup veteran Terry Hutchinson aboard as tactician.

"Jim sailed his best day of the entire week. He was really on his game today. As a team, we sailed to win, sailed with conviction," said Hutchinson, who was sailing a monohull for the first time in a year because he was skippering Artemis Racing, the Swedish challenger for the America's Cup. "I'm not surprised at all. We have a good team with really good sailors. Our expectations are to always win."

Richardson said there were some races when Barking Mad was in fifth or sixth and managed to pick up a couple placements, which was crucial. "Fighting back when you're in a bad situation is huge because every point counts in this class," he said.

Brian Porter (Lake Geneva, WI) and his team on Full Throttle duked it out with Alec Cutler (Pembroke, Bermuda) and the hedgehog crew from beginning to end in Melges 24 class, second-largest of the regatta with 23 boats. Full Throttle won Race 9 to build a cushion then placed third in Race 10 to seal a three-point victory over hedgehog, which got the gun in the final start.

"It couldn't have been a nicer week. We had great wind, great competition and great race committee work," said Porter, who has now captured Melges 24 class three times at Key West. Andy Burdick served as tactician and did a superb job despite fighting through terrible illness on Thursday and Friday. Sam Rogers trimmed the spinnaker while Matt Woodworth worked the bow aboard Full Throttle, which earned the ultimate honor of Quantum Boat of the Week.

"I really have to credit my crew. My team is really exceptional. As a group, we really work well together," Porter said. "Our biggest edge was downwind sailing. We had really good speed going downwind and I think that was a big difference."

Andrea Pozzi took up the sport of sailing a year and a half ago and showed he is a quick study, winning the Melges 32 class in just his fifth regatta. Bombarda finished first or second in six of 12 races and led the 11-boat fleet from start to finish, holding off a late surge by Leenabarca (Alex Jackson, Riverside, CT).

"This is a dream. It is the first regatta we have won so that makes it particularly special. We will always remember Key West 2013," Pozzi said. "It was a tactically difficult regatta with a lot of wind changes. It was very exciting sailing, lots of adrenalin every day."

Multiple world champion Lorenzo Bressana called tactics for Pozzi, who called his countryman "an artist" and "a genius." Federico Michetti, who has teamed with Bressani to win Melges 24 and 32 world crowns, was aboard as trimmer.

J/70 was the largest class at Quantum Key West 2013 with 39 boats and the brand new design was showcased with some spectacular racing. North Sails pro Tim Healy and his experienced team on Helly Hansen seized the lead on Thursday then held it by winning both races on Friday, which featured 14-16 knot winds. Geoff Becker (tactician), John Mollicone (trimmer) and Dave Reed (foredeck) comprised the crew on Helly Hansen.

"It was really fun to figure out how to sail the boat. Right up to the last race we were working on tuning and experimenting with techniques," said Healy, a J/24 champion who was making his J/70 debut. "We went out early every morning and tinkered with sail trim and rig tune. We made progress every day and the crew worked very hard at fine-tuning every maneuver."

David Franzel (Somerville, MA) captured the Corinthian portion of J/70 class, consisting of 12 boats that did not have a professional aboard. Franzel sailed Spring to a steady stream of firsts and seconds within the Corinthian contingent.

Robin Team notched his third Key West victory aboard his J/122 Teamwork, which topped PHRF 1 in convincing fashion. Team said the heavy air that predominated during the week really favored his boat, which finished first or second in nine of 10 races.

"It was a fun, fun week. We had a very competitive class, but the conditions were consistently ideal for our boat," said Team, who had North Sails pro Jonathan Bartlett aboard as tactician. "We had brand new sails and impeccable crew work. We gained more in the corners than we did going up and down the course."

It was another heartbreaking finish for skipper Bill Sweetser and his team on Rush, a J/109 that has competed in Key West 10 times without winning its class. Sweetser has led the regatta on many occasions only to finish as runner-up, and that was scenario again this year. Rush led at the end of racing from Monday through Thursday, but surrendered the lead to Tangent on Friday. Skipper Gerry Taylor and his crew on the Cape Fear 38 closed the regatta with three straight bullets to nip Rush by two points.

Apparition, owned by Ken Colburn of Dover, MA, won the Swan 42 class by the narrowest of margins - nipping Daring (John Hele, Newport, RI) by just one point.

So close was the competition in Swan 42 that six of the seven boats won a race and only three points separated the top four finishers.

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Quantum Key West 2013
Results after Four Days - Top Boats in Class

Place, Yacht Name, Yacht Type, Owner/Skipper, City, State, Country, Results, Total Points

KWRW Division 1 Course

High Performance Class (HPR - 9 Boats)

1. Decision, HPR Carkeek 40, Stephen Murray , New Orleans, LA, USA, 2-2-2-4-1-1-2-2; 16
2. SPOOKIE, HPR Carkeek 40, Steve & Heidi Benjamin , Norwalk, CT, USA, 1-1-1-1-3-8-1-1; 17
3. Chessie Racing, Farr 400, George Collins , Miami Beach, FL, USA, 6-4-4-2-4-6-4-4; 34

IRC 1 (Mini Maxi Class) (IRC - 2 Boats)

1. Shockwave, Reichel/Pugh mini maxi, George Sakellaris , Framingham, MA, USA, 1-2-1-1-1-2-1-1; 10
2. Bella Mente, Judel-Vrolijk Mini Maxi, Hap Fauth , Minneapolis, MN, USA, 2-1-2-2-2-1-2-2; 14

IRC 2 (52 Class) (IRC - 6 Boats)

1. Azzurra, TP 52, Alberto Roemmers , Porto Cervo, Sardinia, Italy, 1-6-4-1-2-2-1-4; 21
2. Rán, TP 52, Niklas Zennstrom , Southampton, Hampshire, UK, 5-2-1-2-3-3-2-3; 21
3. Quantum Racing, TP 52, Doug DeVos , Ada, MI, USA, 4-1-5-3-1-4-3-1; 22

IRC 2 (52 Super Series) (IRC - 6 Boats)

1. Azzurra (SS), TP 52, Alberto Roemmers , Buenos Aires, Caba, ARG, 1-6-4-1-2-2-1-4; 21
2. Rán (SS), TP 52, Niklas Zennstrom , Southampton, Hampshire, UK, 5-2-1-2-3-3-2-3; 21
3. Quantum Racing (SS), TP 52, Doug DeVos , Ada, MI, USA, 4-1-5-3-1-4-3-1; 22

IRC Sub-Class (IRC - 4 Boats)

1. Catapult (IRC), Ker 40, Marc Glimcher , New York, NY, USA, 3-3-2-2-1-2-1-1; 15
2. SPOOKIE (IRC), HPR Carkeek 40, Steve & Heidi Benjamin , Norwalk, CT, USA, 1-1-1-1-3-4-3-2; 16
3. Decision (IRC), HPR Carkeek 40, Stephen Murray , New Orleans, LA, USA, 2-2-3-4-2-1-2-3; 19

Farr 400 One Design (One Design - 4 Boats)

1. Chessie Racing (OD), Farr 400, George Collins , Miami Beach, FL, USA, 3-1-1-1-1-3-1-1; 12
2. Meridian X (OD), Farr 400, W.S. Shelhorse , Virginia Beach, VA, USA, 2-4-2-3-2-2-2-3; 20
3. Spaceman Spiff (OD), Farr 400, Rob Ruhlman , Cleveland, OH, USA, 4-3-4-2-3-1-3-2; 22

Farr 40 (One Design - 6 Boats)

1. Barking Mad, Farr 40, James Richardson , Boston, MA, USA, 1-4-2-3-3-1-4-3; 21
2. Flash Gordon 6, Farr 40, Helmut Jahn , Chicago, IL, USA, 3-6-5-2-1-6-1-2; 26
3. Charisma, Farr 40, Nico Poons , Monaco, MON, 6-5-6-1-2-5-2-1; 28

Swan 42 (One Design - 7 Boats)

1. Apparition, Swan 42, Ken Colburn , Dover, MA, USA, 7-3-2-1-4-4-3-1; 25
2. Stark Raving Mad VI, Swan 42, James Madden , Fort Lauderdale, FL, USA, 5-2-4-5-3-1-2-5; 27
3. Arethusa, Swan 42, Philip Lotz , Newport, RI, USA, 6-4-1-3-1-5-4-7; 31

KWRW Division 2 Course

Melges 32 (One Design - 11 Boats)

1. Bombarda, Melges 32, Andrea Pozzi , Milano, ITA, 1-8-6-1-6-1-2-5-2-3-[8]; 27
2. Swing, Melges 32, Keisuke Suzuki , Nishinomiya, Hyogo, JPN, 5-4-8-4-2-3-5-2-4-7-[8]; 36
3. Leenabarca, Melges 32, Alex Jackson , Riverside, CT, USA, 11-2-4-7-3-7-1-7-5-1-[11]; 37

Melges 24 (One Design - 23 Boats)

1. Full Throttle, Melges 24, Brian Porter , Lake Geneva, WI, USA, 7-1-2-3-1-3-1-3-1-1-[7]; 16
2. hedgehog, Melges 24, Alec Cutler , Pembroke, BER, 2-2-3-1-2-2-2-4-8-2-[8]; 20
3. West Marine Rigging/New England Ropes, Melges 24, Bora Gulari , Detroit, MI, USA, 6-4-1-4-4-4-4-2-2-5-[6]; 30

J 70 (One Design - 39 Boats)

1. Helly Hansen, J 70, Tim Healy , Newport, RI, USA, 23-14-3-3-1-1-19/SCP-1-6-2-[23]; 50
2. Savasana, J 70, Brian Keane , Weston, MA, USA, 15-25-1-19-2-2-1-5-5-1-[25]; 51
3. Stampede, J 70, Loring / Pasquinelli , Dallas, TX, USA, 18-33-5-1-4-12-2-7-4-4-[33]; 57

J 70 (Corinthian) (One Design - 12 Boats)

1. Nostalgia (COR), J 70, Blake & Lud Kimbrough , Newport, RI, USA, 4-6-1-7-2-1-1-1-3-3-[7]; 22
2. B Squared (COR), J 70, Brian Elliot / David Hyer (T) , Sayville, NY, USA, 1-1-9-1-4-2-2-3-4-5-[9]; 23
3. Spring (COR), J 70, David Franzel , Somerville, MA, USA, 3-5-4-2-1-3-7-4-1-1-[7]; 24

KWRW Division 3 Course

J 80 (One Design - 4 Boats)

1. Vayu 2, J 80, Ron Buzil , Evanston, IL, USA, 1-1-1-2-1-1-1-1; 9
2. Participant III, J 80, G. John Krediet , Stamford, CT, USA, 2-2-3-1-3-2-2-2; 17
3. Courageous, J 80, Gary Panariello , Manhasset, NY, USA, 4-4-2-3-2-4-3-4; 26

PHRF 1 (PHRF_ToT - 6 Boats)

1. Teamwork, J 122, Robin Team , Lexington, NC, USA, 1-2-1-2-2-1-1-4; 14
2. White Gold, J 44 MOD, James D. Bishop , Jamestown, RI, USA, 3-1-5-1-1-6-2-3; 22
3. Lake Effect, J 111, Robert Hesse , Youngstown, NY, USA, 2-3-2-4-3-3-6-1; 24

PHRF 2 (PHRF_ToT - 8 Boats)

1. Rush, J 109, Bill Sweetser , Annapolis, MD, USA, 2-1-2-1-3-2-5-5; 21
2. Tangent, Cape Fear 38, Gerald Taylor , Annapolis, MD, USA, 5-5-1-2-2-3-3/SCP-1; 22
3. Rebecca, J 120, Glenn Gault , League City, TX, USA, 8-8-7-3-1-1-2-2; 32