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Final Day Drama and Very Happy Sailors at Quantum Key West 2014

Key West, Florida Keys - There was plenty of final day drama at Quantum Key West 2014 as the winners of several classes were determined during the last race. And conditions could not have been better for those winner-take-all scenarios with the southernmost point of the United States delivering the strongest winds of the regatta.

North-northeasterly breezes in the 18-24 knot range made for some spectacular racing on all three courses and enabled all 10 classes to complete 10 races for the five-day event.

No class was more closely watched all week than IRC 2, which featured six 52-footers crewed by a who's who of the professional ranks. *Quantum Racing*, skippered by Amway president Doug DeVos of Ida, Mich., began the day with a three-point lead and did what was necessary to secure the 52 Class championship by placing third in Race 10.

"What a great week!" DeVos exclaimed upon returning to the dock following Friday's lone race. "Great competition, great weather, great race management and great sailing conditions. This is really a fabulous event from top to bottom."

America's Cup veterans Terry Hutchinson and Ed Baird served as tactician and strategist, respectively, aboard *Quantum*, which wound up winning five of the 10 races. Juan Vila was aboard as navigator for entry fielded by the sailmaking company that is title sponsor of the event.

I, the British entry skippered by Skype founder Niklas Zennstrom, finished second in the final race, but wound up two points behind *Quantum* for the regatta. *Ran*, the reigning TP 52 World Champion, won two races and placed second or third in six others to finish 5 ½ points ahead of the Italian entry *Azzurra*, which captured class honors at Quantum Key West 2013.

"It was a fantastic week of sailing and we are very pleased with the regatta in terms of how the team and boat performed," Zennstrom said. "It's a good start to the season, a good start to the series."

Ran and *Quantum* held first and second for most of Race 10, but *Azzurra* sailed a great last leg and skipped past both to get the gun. Vasco Vascotto (tactician), Francesco Bruni (strategist) and Guillermo Parada (helmsman) comprised the afterguard aboard *Azzurra*, which earned the Quantum Sails Boat of the Day award.

An anticipated duel between the top two boats in Melges 32 class never materialized as skipper Dalton DeVos and the *Delta team* had an on-course-side start and were never able to challenge owner-drive Alec Cutler and the *Hedgehog* crew.

"We wanted to get a great start and pushed the line. Unfortunately, we were just a tad early and had to turn around," DeVos said. "Hey, that's sailboat racing. They don't let you get a head start."

Continued....

Final Day Drama and Very Happy Sailors at Quantum Key West 2014 -- *continued*

Multi-time Canadian Olympian Richard Clarke called tactics for Cutler, who got a great start and led around every mark in winning by more than a minute. Two-time Olympic gold medalist Jonathan McKee was tactician on *Delta*, which battled back to take second and actually tied *Hedgehog* with 15 total points. Both boats won four races, but the Bermuda entry won the tiebreaker based on the result of Race 10.

"We knew we had to go out and win the race. That was the only option," Cutler said. "The committee boat was favored and we won that end of the line. We then put the hammer down and just sailed as fast as we could."

Cutler, a former intercollegiate sailor at the Naval Academy, has competed in Key West five times and been runner-up twice in Melges 24 class. This was his first victory in the annual midwinter regatta off the Conch Republic. "Our entire crew worked really well together and our boat-handling was outstanding the whole week," he said.

Organizers with Premiere Racing deemed the most impressive performance of the regatta was put forth by skipper Tim Healy and his team on *Helly Hansen*, which won the 60-boat J/70 class in convincing fashion. Healy, a professional with North Sails, repeated as class champ in Key West by winning two races and placing second or third in five others.

Helly Hansen clinched the regatta by finishing third in Race 9 and therefore did not sail the final race, using that as its throw-out. Geoff Becker and John Mollicone combined on tactics and trimming while Gordon Borges worked the bow for Healy, who is also a standout J/24 sailor.

"Obviously the biggest key to success is having a good team. My guys did an awesome job of boat-handling and tactics," Healy said. "We sailed here last year so we had a real good feel for the race course. This team has also sailed J/24s together the past few years so we have a comfort level that makes a big difference."

Healy and *Helly Hansen* came away with the biggest prize – capturing Quantum Sails Boat of the Week honors. "We had a huge class down here last year with a lot of really good sailors so it's a great accomplishment to come out on top. Winning Key West is definitely one of the highlights of my career," said Healy, a 42-year-old resident of Jamestown, R.I. Eight different boats took first place during the week.

Hot Mess, skippered by Rob Britts of St. Petersburg, Fla., was crowned as Corinthian champion of J/70 class. Britts posted six wins and three seconds within the 14-boat sub-class comprised of all-amateur crews.

Four boats entered the final day of action with a mathematical chance to win IRC 3 class, comprised of a diverse group of designs. *Arethusa*, a Swan 42 owned by Phil Lotz of Fort Lauderdale, finished fourth in Race 10 to hold the lead for a third straight day. Former Olympic medalist Jeff Madrigali served as tactician aboard *Arethusa*, which placed seventh out of 10 boats in Race 1, but never finished lower than fourth the rest of the way. Just eight points separated the top three boats in IRC 3 with the Ker 46 *Tonnerre de Breskens* (Peter Vroon, The Netherlands) the runner-up by five points.

"We are very excited about winning our class at such a prestigious regatta," said Lotz, who had placed at Key West a couple times before. "Our boat was very good in the medium breeze that predominated this week. We tried to start cleanly and had a fairly conservative game-plan. Jeff was outstanding tactically all week and did a good job of keeping us in phase."

PHRF 1 was also up for grabs going into the last race and *Spaceman Spiff*, the J/111 owned by Rob Ruhlman of Cleveland, Ohio, seized the moment by winning. This was the 13th trip to Key West and the first class victory for the *Spaceman Spiff* program.

"We've been trying to win this regatta for a while and it feels good to finally break through. It feels even better because of the quality of competition we faced. This is some of the closest PHRF racing in which I've ever participated," said Ruhlman, who had his wife and son aboard. "We really had a blast this week. It was great sailing and all the people in the class are so friendly. We passed Teamwork on the way into the harbor and their entire crew applauded us."

Teamwork, a J/122 skippered by Robin Team of Lexington, N.C., came up short in its bid to three-peat in Key West – finishing 4 ½ points behind *Spaceman Spiff*.

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Skipper Bill Sweetser has been bringing his J/109 *Rush* to Key West for 11 years and been runner-up on four occasions. The Annapolis resident sported a huge smile on Friday morning after clinching the class championship in PHRF 2 on Thursday. Sweetser steered *Rush* to victory in five races and placed second or third in fourth others in building an insurmountable lead that allowed him to stay ashore on Friday.

"It feels fantastic to finally win here in Key West! You could say we got the monkey off our back, or maybe it was a gorilla. I was tired of going home and hearing people say 'Too bad you got second again.' The whole bridesmaid talk was getting old," Sweetser said. "Everybody is so ecstatic. We can't wait to get the whole crew up on stage at the awards party."

Skipper Ron Buzil and his team aboard *Vayu2* were wire-to-wire winners in J/80 class, which attracted 12 entries. A pair of highly-regarded professionals, Jahn Tihansky and Andrew Kerr, served as helmsman and tactician aboard the boat chartered from J/World Annapolis. This was the second straight year that Buzil had chartered the boat and the team repeated as class champs.

"We had our mojo going early and managed to build a fairly substantial lead. We never really had a bad race and I attribute that to being able to get off the line cleanly and go where we wanted," said Tihansky, owner of J/World Annapolis Performance Sailing School. "Andrew Kerr knows these waters well and did a masterful job of playing the shifts."

Little Wing, an Italian entry owned by Nicola Ardito, had the ot firsts in the regatta, reeling off nine straight victories in Melges 24 class before sitting out the final race and using that as its throw-out.

Bill Wagner
Press Officer

For those who can't be out on the race course, there will be plenty of ways to follow the racing. Last year was a first for "Key West Live" coverage (**#QKeyWest**) and there will be more real time bloggers and video coverage to keep everyone connected this year. <http://premiere-racing.com/QKWLive/>

Regatta dates are January 19 - 24, 2014.

Event Sponsors include Title Sponsor **Quantum Sails** and Day Sponsors **Lewmar/Navtec** (Official Marine Hardware), and **Mount Gay® Rum** (Official Rum). The Supporting Sponsors are **B&G** (Official Marine Electronics), **Marlow Ropes** (Official Rope), and **Gill** (Official Technical Gear). *Continued..*

Key West Race Week is also supported by The **Florida Keys & Key West Tourism Council**. The **Ocean Key Resort and Spa** is the Official Hotel. **Sapporo USA** is the Official Beer and **Regatta Ginger Beer** is the Official Ginger Beer. **Chelsea Clock** is providing their classic Ship's Bell Clocks for the Boat of the Day trophies.

23 Industry Partners bring their support through a program that is now in its 13th year. Quantum Key West 2014 is a **US SAILING** sanctioned event.

The racing will be conducted under permit in the **Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary**. The sanctuary protects 2,900 square nautical miles of critical marine habitat, including coral reef, hard bottom, seagrass meadow, mangrove communities and sand flats.

Event information, past results and photos: www.Premiere-Racing.com

About

Quantum Sail Design Group



www.QuantumSails.com

Founded by a group of independent, experienced sailmakers who shared a common vision, Quantum Sail Design Group is dedicated to overcoming the trend toward mass-marketing and mediocrity in the sailmaking industry. The company is known for its high-performance Fusion M sails and winning sail designs in dozens of classes from dinghies to super yachts.

Quantum has more than 60 sales and service outlets throughout the world, with world headquarters in Traverse City, MI and European headquarters in Barcelona, Spain.

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Top Three in Class after Five Days

Place, Yacht Name, Owner/Skipper, Hometown, Results, Total Points

Mini Maxi Class (IRC 1) (IRC - 3 Boats)

1. Bella Mente, Hap Fauth , USA - 3, 1, 2, 1, 1, 1, 1, 3, 2, 3, ; 18
2. Caol Ila R, Alex Schaeerer , USA - 1, 2, 1, 2, 2, 2, 3, 2, 3, 2, ; 20
3. Shockwave, George Sakellaris , USA - 2, 3, 3, 4/DNF, 4/DNC, 4/DNS, 2, 1, 1, 1, ; 25

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

1. Quantum Racing, Doug DeVos , USA - 1, 1, 1, 6, 3, 4, 1, 2, 1, 3, ; 23
2. R 疣, Niklas Zennstrom , UK - 2, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 1, 5, 2, ; 25
3. AZZURRA, Pablo A. Roemmers , ARG - 3, 3, 2, 2, 4, 1, 4.5, 6, 4, 1, ; 30.5

High Performance Class (HPR - 4 Boats)

1. SPOOKIE, Steve & Heidi Benjamin , USA - 4, 2, 1, 2, 1, 1, 1, 1, 2, 1, ; 16
2. Decision, Stephen Murray , USA - 3, 1, 2, 1, 3, 4, 3, 3, 3, 2, ; 25
3. Riot, Marc Ewing , USA - 2, 3, 4, 3, 2, 2, 2, 1, 4, ; 25

IRC 3 (IRC - 10 Boats)

1. Arethusa, Phil Lotz , USA - 7, 1, 4, 1, 3, 2, 4, 2, 2, 4, ; 30
2. Tonnerre de Breskens 3, Peter Vroon , NED - 4, 8, 3, 2, 6, 1, 3, 4, 3, 1, ; 35
3. Catapult, Marc Glimcher , USA - 1, 7, 1, 6, 1, 7, 2, 1, 7, 5, ; 38

52 Class (Super Series) (One Design - 6 Boats)

1. Quantum Racing (SS), Doug DeVos , USA - 1, 1, 1, 6, 3, 4, 1, 2, 1, 3, ; 23
2. R 疣 (SS), Niklas Zennstrom , UK - 2, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 4, 1, 5, 2, ; 26
3. AZZURRA (SS), Pablo A. Roemmers , ARG - 3, 3, 2, 2, 4, 1, 3, 6, 4, 1, ; 29

Melges 32 (One Design - 7 Boats)

1. Hedgehog, Alec Cutler , BER - 1, 1, 4, 2, 2, 1, 3, 2, 2, 1, [4] ; 15
2. Delta, Dalton DeVos , USA - 2, 3, 5, 1, 1, 2, 2, 1, 1, 2, [5] ; 15
3. Helly Hansen Inga from Sweden, Richard Goransson , SWE - 6, 2, 3, 5, 3, 3, 1, 6, 4, 3, [6] ; 30

Melges 24 (One Design - 6 Boats)

1. Little Wing, Nicola Ardito , ITA - 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 7/DNS, [7] ; 9
2. Tramp, Thomas Ritter , USA - 2, 3, 3, 3, 3, 2, 2, 3, 3, 7/DNS, [7] ; 24
3. Zingara, Richard Reid , CAN - 4, 4, 6, 2, 4, 3, 6, 2, 4, 1, [6] ; 30

J 70 (One Design - 60 Boats)

1. Helly Hansen, Tim Healy , USA - 2, 20, 3, 2, 2, 1, 4, 1, 3, 61/DNS, [61] ; 38
2. Savasana, Brian Keane , USA - 4, 3, 12, 28, 7, 2, 1, 13, 2, 4, [28] ; 48
3. Boats.com, Ian Atkins , GBR - 11, 10, 61/OCS, 3, 8, 3, 3, 8, 14, 1, [61] ; 61

PHRF 1 (PHRF_ToT - 8 Boats)

1. Spaceman Spiff, Rob and Ryan Ruhlman , USA - 2, 3, 2, 3, 2, 3.5, 4, 3, 6, 1, ; 29.5
2. Teamwork, Robin Team , USA - 5, 8, 6, 1, 1, 1, 1, 7, 1, 3, ; 34
3. Fireball, Team Fireball , USA - 1, 5, 1, 2, 3, 6, 5, 2, 5, 4, ; 34

PHRF 2 (PHRF_ToT - 7 Boats)

1. Rush, Bill Sweetser , USA - 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 1, 3, 3, 1, 8/DNC, ; 23
2. Heat Wave, Gary Weisberg , USA - 3, 5, 2, 3, 5, 2, 5, 1, 2, 3, ; 31
3. NANUQ, Glenn Doncaster , USA - 5, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 1, 4, 3, 1, ; 34

J 80 (One Design - 12 Boats)

1. Vayu2, Ron Buzil , USA - 1, 2, 1, 1, 1, 2, 1, 1, 2, 4, ; 16
2. Rumor, John Storck, Jr , USA - 8, 3, 2, 4, 2, 1, 4, 6, 5, 3, ; 38
3. Church Key, Chris & Liz Chadwick , USA - 7, 6/SCP, 4, 2, 6, 4, 2, 5, 6, 1, ; 43