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RACING CHANGES FOR THE 2013 ST BARTHS BUCKET

OVERVIEW

There are always lessons learned at any superyacht regatta. The St Barths Bucket organizers strive to make the regatta a better experience for the yacht owners and participants each and every year.

With St Barths averaging 40 yachts over the past five years, it has created challenges both on the water and ashore. This year's event will again showcase some of the most impressive superyachts in the world and a fleet size that is once again nearly double that of any other superyacht regatta on the racing calendar.

Much was learned with last year's record fleet and the Event Director produced a detailed post-event assessment for the Directors and sponsors. The report highlighted areas of concern and provided recommendations that addressed these. We expect that these will ultimately make the Bucket experience even more enjoyable for yacht owners, their guests and crews.

While there were no collisions last year, there were too many close calls – even with the moderate conditions experienced on all three race days. Certainly an argument could be made that congestion on the racecourse led to safety issues and that the amount of passing that some yachts had to do impacted fair sailing and the rating rule authority's task of handicapping yachts fairly.

CLASS PURSUIT RACING

This year in St. Barths, the Bucket Regatta will use the same popular pursuit racing format with a focus on class racing. We will use the same controls we've used to bring the finishes together, to separate them. We do not want to lose any of the excitement of our traditional pursuit racing format, therefore, we will structure the racing to have each class finish together (as opposed to the entire fleet). As such, we will have up to a dozen yachts approaching the finish at a time.... instead of forty! This will be an important step forward with regard to enhancing safe racing.

In function this will be simple. All yachts will share the same start and finish line and will sail the assigned course for their specific class. The rating authority and race committee will structure the starting times, such that the three classes will finish at different times – the gap between class finishes will likely be approximately 10 minutes. We are running test scenarios this month to evaluate starting sequence lengths with different courses for classes, and other relevant factors. Within each of the three pursuit classes the racing will be as exciting as ever, featuring the routine close finishes, but there will be less congestion at the last few turning marks and the finish line.

We are excited about this new development, and look forward to far less "hair raising" finishes while maintaining the exciting pursuit racing concept of first boat in class home wins.