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CONTACT: Barby MacGowan, Media Pro Int'l, 401-849-0220, [barby.macgowan@mediapronewport.com](mailto:barby.macgowan@mediapronewport.com) or Marcy Trenholm, Storm Trysail Club, 914-834-8857, [stormtry@aol.com](mailto:stormtry@aol.com)

## **Dad, Can I Have the Keys to the Big Boat?**

LARCHMONT, N.Y. (October 15, 2009) -- Like they've been doing every Columbus Day weekend for nine years, Storm Trysail along with Larchmont Yacht Club and a multitude of sponsors have once again introduced the joys of big-boat racing to boatloads of college sailors in a two-day mini course with maxi impact. Held October 10-11 on Long Island Sound, the 2009 Intercollegiate Offshore Regatta, which has become the largest college regatta in the U.S., hosted 31 schools and 40 teams racing in five divisions on boats ranging from J/44s to J/105s. With Weather Gods smiling, the young sailors -- 327 of them to be exact -- competed against each other on teams and with mentors (owners who donated their boats for the cause and served as coaches and safety officers) in brisk 18-22 knot breezes on Saturday and a more forgiving 10-15 knots on Sunday. Six windward-leeward, twice-around races were sailed.

Two of the five divisions were won by teams from Maine, and the overall winner was the University of Rhode Island (URI) sailing on Richard du Moulin's Express *37 Lora Ann* in the IRC 35 class. Led by Jesse Fielding, the URI Sailing Team turned in a perfect score in all six races, which earned it the Paul Hoffmann Trophy, donated last year in memory of Paul Hoffmann, Sr., who was an active ocean racer for decades and a long-time member of Larchmont Yacht Club and a past Commodore of the Storm Trysail Club (STC).

"Our team enjoys this regatta because we learn a lot here," said Fielding, explaining that his same team sailed together last year at this event, with "Professor" du Moulin helping them then, as well. The team used the knowledge gained to win the Kennedy Cup at the Naval Academy, and because of that victory, it will be the sole U.S. representative at the 2009 Student Yachting World Cup, to be held later this month in Marseille, France.

"The most publicized and recognizable college sailing is done in small double-handed or singlehanded dinghies," said Fielding, "This event puts the proverbial keys to larger race boats in the hands of young sailors and provides an unprecedented opportunity for college sailors to change disciplines. College sailing is absolutely a team sport but not in the classic sense of the word team. The chance to sail a boat with eight or more teammates is truly a different sailing experience that demands the same skill and focus of small dinghy sailing but with a very specific focus on making eight different skills happen simultaneously, just like on a soccer field or baseball diamond."

Joey Mello, the URI Sailing Team's Coach added, "What a great event. Our team thoroughly enjoyed it. We hope the event is a great launching pad for us going into the World Cup."

The largest boats in the regatta were the J/44s sailed by teams from the service academies and St. Mary's, which have offshore teams. These boats are big and heavy and require experienced crew. All the J/44s used class-owned one-design sails, which made the seven boats a very tight one-design group. Maine Maritime followed up its two wins in the Port of Los Angeles Harbor Cup with a win in the IOR class. Sailing STC Commodore Jim Bishop's *Gold Digger*, they crushed the rest of the fleet and beat the second-place team from the Naval Academy by nine points.

Navy found its pace in the IRC 40 class sailing George Petrides' modified J/120 *Avra*. They whupped the second-place team from Georgetown, sailing Steve Furnary's *Patriot*, by nine points as well. (George Petrides won the Edward du Moulin Trophy.)

In the 10-boat J/109 class the teams from the University of Michigan and Webb Institute tied for first. But the tie only existed because Michigan did not finish the third race due to blowing up a chute and losing the wind instruments off the top of the mast in a broach that occurred when a 30 knot-gust hit a majority of the J/109 fleet halfway through the race. Michigan, sailing Andrew Berdon's *Strider*, had to count the 11-point DNF (did not finish) since the regatta had no throw-outs. On the water, the team out-sailed the other J/109 teams upwind and downwind. When it got stuck on the wrong side of a shift, Michigan clawed its way back instead of waiting for a "Hail Mary" shift to save them. Their finishes were 1, 1, 11, 1, 1, 3 for a total of 18 points.

The biggest fleet was the 13-boat J/105 class. The team from Bowdoin, a regular at the event, sailed Carl Olsson's *Morning Glory* to a slim two-point victory over the second team from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy sailing Kevin Grainger's *Gumption 3*. First-time participant Trinity College from Hartford, Conn., finished third with three firsts in their score line.

"This regatta could not happen without the generosity of the boat owners who not only lend their boats but lend their expertise onboard," said Regatta Chair Adam Loory. "These guys come because we work hard to convince them that the regatta is a chance to give something back to the sport, but they return because they have so much fun with the kids learning from them and, at times, they learn from the kids."

One of the most experienced owners at ocean racing, Richard du Moulin, said he learned a good move from Jesse Fielding this year. "When the head blew out of my old spinnaker on Saturday, Jesse jibed the boat so that we didn't run it over when it fell in the water next to the boat. As a result, we were able to pull it in without destroying it. That's a good trick!"

Dick Neville, a past commodore of STC said, "Each time I watch those kids sailing those big boats I think 'this is the most important thing the Storm Trysail Foundation does.' They are all having such a good time and they are learning the teamwork of sailing big boats! If they keep having experiences like this, they will be life-long big boat sailors."

Dr. Dan Herron, owner of the J/105 *Liquid Courage*, a first time participant, said after the regatta, “Thanks again for the opportunity to participate. Watching the expression on the skipper’s face as he surfed *Liquid Courage* downwind on Saturday was priceless!”

Paul Hoffmann, Jr., who drove the windward mark boat said, “The way the college sailors performed was terrific. I couldn’t believe how well the boats were handled and how solid their tactics were – much better than many boats are handled during a typical weekend race.”

The Storm Trysail Foundation and Larchmont Yacht Club put an overwhelming amount of energy and resources into making this a top quality event. The Principal Race Officer was Charles “Butch” Ulmer, the Chief Judge was Arthur Wullschleger and the Protest Committee Chair was Mary Savage. (At one point this experienced committee started one fleet while finishing others on the opposite side of the committee boat and at the same time directed the mark boat to set a new windward mark.)

The regatta was entirely free for the sailors and boat owners thanks to the generous sponsorship of Prestige Toyota, Vineyard Vines, Rolex, Caithness Energy, Safe Flight Instruments, UK-Halsey Sailmakers and Gill. Not only did the sponsors contribute cash and a copious number of coveted raffle items but also Rolex provided duffel bags for every boat owner, and Vineyard Vines provided enough event polo shirts to cover the owners and teams of the top three boats.

For complete results and pictures, go to:  
<http://www.yachtscoring.com/emenu.cfm?eID=302>

### **About the Storm Trysail Foundation**

The Storm Trysail Foundation is a 501(C)3 charitable organization dedicated to supporting the education of young sailors, junior safety at sea, and intercollegiate big boat racing. The purpose of the Storm Trysail Foundation is to effect, promote and enhance the education of young sailors in safety at sea, safe boat handling in all conditions, and safe blue water racing and passage making, through the hosting of seminars, regattas, and other on-the-water training, and through the making of grants to other institutions to foster similar training.

For more information about the Storm Trysail Foundation, contact the Storm Trysail Club, 914-834-8857, [stormtry@aol.com](mailto:stormtry@aol.com) or visit [www.stormtrysailfoundation.org](http://www.stormtrysailfoundation.org).