



THIERRY MARTINEZ/SEA&CO.

Huge fleet competes in new class championships.

Introduced just two and a half years ago, the J/70 has quickly made its mark as a racing class, earning one-design status from the International Sailing Federation (ISAF) in November 2013. The class has been so successful that 86 teams representing 14 nations gathered in Newport, Rhode Island, in mid-September for the inaugural J/70 world championships, hosted by the New York Yacht Club at Harbour Court and sponsored by Helly Hansen.

With a 22-foot waterline, carbon rig, high aspect, and lifting bulb keel, the J/70 has achieved a blend of stability and performance that's attracted championship-caliber sailors from many other classes, including J/22, J/24, J/80, Etchells 22, and Melges 24 and 32. More than 600 J/70s have been sold in more than 20 countries since the boat's 2011 debut.

At the world championships, one of the many notable entries was *Junkanoo Racing*, the only team crewed entirely by women. "I was looking for a boat that I could race in a competitive fleet, yet also be able to take out with my husband and seven-year-old daughter," says skipper Suzy Leech, a former Olympic and America's Cup sailor from Jamestown, Rhode Island. "The J/70 has turned out to be the perfect boat for me."

Despite stiff competition from *Catapult* skippered by Joel Ronning of Minneapolis, the Jamestown resident Tim Healy and his crew of *Helly Hansen* emerged victorious in the regatta. The championship wasn't decided until the final day of racing on September 13th when three races were held on a choppy Rhode Island Sound in 8-14 knots of wind.

"It was a fun week," said Healy whose crew included Gordon Borges, Geoffrey Becker and Paul Abdullah. "The nice part is there was wind the whole time; we enjoyed that, but because there's wind you have to work hard and at this point everybody is tired but also excited at the same time."

Several southern sailors made the trip up to Rhode Island for the regatta. Leading the way was Martin Kullman of St. Petersburg, Florida, who skippered *New Wave* to a fourth-place finish overall. j70worlds.com

Spindrift 2 Update

Maxi-trimaran *Spindrift 2*—the world's largest racing multihull at 40 meters (131 feet) LOA—was forced to abandon her bid to shatter the record for fastest crewed transatlantic crossing in late summer when a suitable weather window failed to materialize (Racing Roundup, September 2014). However, that setback has not stopped the team behind the French-built speed machine from attempting yet another feat of staggering proportions: the 3,550-nautical-mile Route du Rhum, a singlehanded race from France to Guadeloupe in the Caribbean.

Open to both mono- and multihulls, the race was scheduled to begin on November 2nd. At the helm of *Spindrift 2* will be French yachtsman Yann Guichard, who has made significant modifications to the behemoth's standard racing mode that should allow him to control her solo. Her overall sail area has been reduced by 20 percent and she has also been fitted with autopilot and reconfigured controls accessible via the cockpit. He will also use a stationary bike to power the boat's winches. Despite the changes, *Spindrift 2* is still the largest entry in the race, which has been held every four years since its inception in 1978. For the 2014 edition, more than 80 boats spanning 5 classes have entered.

"Solo sailing a trimaran the size of *Spindrift 2* requires complete physical commitment," says Guichard. "Small improvements can still to be made to help me with maneuvering the boat or to make me more comfortable, but I am confident in many areas." 

By BRIAN HARTZ