

Brazilian Dominates Highland Spring HIHO 2008

Brazilian pro racer Wilhelm Schurmann aced this years Highland Spring HIHO event. The top ranked Formula racer won all seven races in the events 6-day schedule.

“Schurmann made it look easy,” said race director Simon Woods. “He was first off the line at every start, and always first to finish.”

Schurmann sailed a 10.0 V8 sail and used the stock Techno 2 race fin throughout the event. “It was the perfect set-up for the 15-18 knot winds we had all week”, he said. “I was always set-up just right- fast and in-control on the long inter-island legs.”

The unique Highland Spring HIHO format includes a series of island-to-island windsurfing races between the beautiful British Virgin Islands. Racers literally windsurf from one island to another with a fleet of captained Moorings catamarans in tow. Participants live aboard the cats but all meals are ashore, and there are nightly parties!

It wasn't always effortless for Schurmann. Veteran Highland Spring HIHO racer Jean-Marc Peyronnet from St Martin applied plenty of pressure, in fact in the 13-mile Anegada race it was Peyronnet who reached the beach first only to be outsprinted to the finish by Schurmann.

Schurmann also fell out of the lead on the 20-mile race #6 when he went to low on the long reach from Nanny Cay to St John. Rounding the mark in third he saw Peyronnet and BVI racer Sam Talbot well ahead. Nonetheless, he reeled them in on leg 3 then cruised through the rest of the course down through The Narrows at the bottom of the Sir Francis Drake Channel and to the finish on tiny Little Thatch island.

Tighter racing action was further down in the standings where Master competitor Rupert Rhodes from the UK duked it out with local racer Sam Talbot. The two traded 3rd & 4th place finishes throughout much of the competition. In the end the two were tied, but Talbot took the win by beating Rhodes more often.

Another duo who fought neck and neck all week were windsurfing buddies Rob Auty and Marc Crote from Worcester in England. When you saw one bombing down the course, the other was always nearby. In the final standings the two were just 5-points apart!

UK racer John Burch who finished 18th overall and 2nd in the Super Master class summed up his experience: “Everything seemed to go like clockwork, which is a testament to the amount of organization and coordination going on behind the

scenes.” “I was a bit worried that my wife Pauline might not enjoy it too much, but she's now talking about signing up again for 2009!!

In the end all top ten finishers were from a different country. The top ten racers were from Brazil, St Martin, the BVI, the UK, France, the Cayman Islands, Thailand, Australia, the USA and South Africa.

“It’s a fun week,” said Ed Sparrow of Highland Spring. “We enjoy seeing so many people from all over the World travel to the BVI to attend the event.”