

HT Race kicks off the new sailing season.



The HT Harlingen-Terschelling Race in May 2008 was a resounding success. For two days both large and small teams in various classes battled against each other and the elements. Classic yachts made up a large part of the fleet.

The HT-Race is particularly popular amongst those in the sailing community who do not enjoy large ostentatious racing events. There is most definitely no pomp and ceremony in the HT-Race. The Friesian teams in particular were noticeable for nearly bursting their lungs by shouting at every manoeuvre in an attempt to keep their yachts up to speed. The other teams also put enormous amounts of energy into keeping and improving their positions. A stiff wind meant the race demanded full attention and a keen strategy. And though fervent battle-cries sounded, everything remained resolutely above board.



Wednesday evening



Racing equals working



victron energy
BLUE POWER

HT Race kicks off the new sailing season.



Safety first



...and relax in the harbour



Full speed to Harlingen

The popularity of the HT-Race is largely due to its challenging course across the Wadden-sea. Add to that the super-friendly harbours and marinas to put into every evening and as a participant you'll find yourself out of this world for a few days. The HT-Race is not just about competition, but also about 'the good life'. Indeed, for many a late night in the cosy dark harbour pubs is par for the course. However, during the HT-Race there can be no escape from the alarm clock. Everyone must get up and be ready so that they can enter the next harbour in first position.

Victron team

HT- Sponsor Victron Energy took part with a foursome of hired-in 'Lemsteraken', the quintessential local traditional flat sailers, and with their own supertrimaran 'Sound of Silence'. The company handily combined the HT-Race and business meetings with their dealers and overseas representatives. During the daytime racing Victron-participants were directly involved in the sailing, allowing plenty of opportunity for informal networking during and between events. According to Mathijs Vader of Victron: "The HT-Race is a fantastic sporting event, where you can just get away and let the wind blow through your hair. For Victron, it's a great way to show our overseas representatives the Wadden-sea. It is networking in a sportsmanlike environment, surrounded by nature and the elements. Another reason for us to sign up is that the use of sailpower seamlessly fits our business strategy to supply environmentally friendly and sustainable on-board energy equipment."

Atmosphere

During the race everyone put team spirit, enthusiasm and hospitality first. This relaxed atmosphere plays a main part in the success of the HT-Race. The organisers even exclude any loud advertising from the race in order not to compromise the unspoilt beauty of the Wadden area. The excellent practice-course is perfect for nurturing the novice competition sailor. They will be the rivals in 2009!

The good atmosphere is partly due to great attention to safety. The organisation of the event is in the hands of the Harlinger Water Sport Association (HWSV); a large not-for-profit association which has many volunteers. The HSWV made all possible efforts to guarantee safety during the race. Every day the HT-fleet was accompanied by a large number of police-boats, lifeboats, and vessels belonging to Customs & Excise and the Navy. Although it was business as usual for these professionals, they too enjoyed the pleasant sunshine and good sailing breeze at the yachting event.

History of the HT-Race

The HWSV HT-Race was sailed for the 62nd time this year. The Harlinger Water Sport Association was founded in 1932 by four notable residents of Harlingen. On the inland waterways they used motorboats and other small craft; they ventured out to sea with seaworthy cabin yachts (of about seven metres). Not long after World War 2 they organised yacht races on courses in front of the harbour mouth at Harlingen.

In 1946 the HWSV organised the first yacht race from Harlingen-Terschelling, and vice versa, after an idea by the then president L. van Droog. From that time onward the HT-Race became an annual event. It is an all-weather race. Nowadays the yachts sail in 8 classes: the smallest boats are around 7 m long; the largest 15m or more! In 2008, 150 yachts took part. In 2009 the HT-Race will be sailed on the 4th and 5th of June. Improved planning means that even at this stage an increase in participants is expected.

Source, with grateful thanks to:

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