

## Conch Republic Cup 2019 Key West Cuba Race Week Wrap-Up

And the winner of CRC2019 is-Captain Mike Austin of Lunasea from the Upper Keys Sailing Club in Key Largo. Fun was had by all during the Conch Republic Cup's 10th Edition of the Key West Cuba Race Week, Cultural Exchange Through Sport. Over 100 participants were hosted in this year's regatta to Cuba. 2019 marks the beginning of a new format for the event with a new time of year, inclusion in the Wreckers Cup Race and a one-way race to Cuba open to racing and participant classes.

The time of year change from January to April was welcomed by everyone. Not only was the weather more enjoyable but CRC2019 begins as the last event in the Conch Republic Independence Celebration, a weeklong event in its 37th year. The Schooner Wharf Bar and Grill, voted the Best Locals Bar in Key West, is now the official headquarters for all CRC events.

The participants started their week by racing in the 34th Annual Schooner Wharf Bar Wrecker's Cup Race Series. April marks the last of the Wrecker's Cup Series held the last Sunday of each month January-April. The awards party celebrated the race results for the month of April as well as the overall for the Wrecker's Cup Series. CRC participants, Atlantic Union II, Kokomo, Where To and Delphinus all won awards for their place in the Wrecker's Cup Race.

The racers then proceeded to Cuba for the Key West to Havana distance race. They docked at the famous Hemingway Marina and were greeted by an awards party with a pig roast and live music provided by Commodore Jose Miguel Diaz Escrich of Hemingway International Yacht Club of Cuba (HIYC). During which the Commodore and Yacht Club were presented with the Banner of Peace, a symbol of the Roerich Pact, which uses the banner to represent and protect culturally significant locations and monuments.

While in Cuba the participants had an opportunity to race with Cuban sailors in front of the Malecon in the Torreón de la Chorrera regatta. Racing with the Cuban boats in front of the Malecon was well received by the spectators along the renowned coastline. As there is little to no local boat traffic due to strict Cuban laws regulating their ability to even be on the water the spectacle of vessels was remarkable. 2019 marks the 500th Anniversary of Havana's founding. Due to this historical event the Commodore gained special permission to enter Havana Harbor for the participants in a nautical parade. Some of the participants stayed in Cuba for the allowed two weeks and others departed early. The new format allows the return trip to be chosen by each vessel based on their weather window and convenience.

Join us next year for the 11th Edition of the Conch Republic Cup April 25-May 2, 2020. Check the website for info and a complete list of winners for all three legs of the Conch Republic Cup.

[www.conchrepubliccup.org](http://www.conchrepubliccup.org)