

Great wind, sunny skies hi-lite 21st Langkawi Regatta

Photography by Scott Murray



The 21st sailing of the Royal Langkawi International Regatta saw 35 boats enter from Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Japan, China, Hong Kong, the United Kingdom, Denmark, and Australia. In all, over 270 sailors from 16 different countries participated including those from Germany, Sweden, Kyrgyzstan, South Korea, Canada, New Zealand, and France.

The regatta's main focus was to position Malaysia, and Langkawi in particular, as a prominent sailing location while promoting sailing and boosting sports tourism for the country, set against the stunning backdrop of the Langkawi archipelago. January is typically the windiest month in Langkawi and Simon James, the Principal Race Officer, noted that the gusts can rival Australia's famed Hamilton Island Race.

This year's event emphasizes competitiveness, inclusivity, women's empowerment, and of course, speed. Notable entrees from the Malay side included Polis Diraja Malaysia (PDRM), Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, and the Malaysian Navy. Member of Parliament (MP) for Langkawi, YB Dato'

Haji Mohd Suhaimi Abdullah, officially started the regatta.

Having the Royal Langkawi Yacht Club as an anchor for the event plays a huge role in the regatta's success. The club's Ocean's E11 even and Charlie's Bar with their convivial atmosphere serve as meeting and rally points for all competitors, helping to create a magical buzz. Throw in a great social media presence, a group of pro-active and young volunteers, great scenery, good wind, an excellent race committee, a caring group of organizers and a mix of good Malay and foreign sailors, both male and female, and you have the ingredients for a very successful regatta.

The first day saw races in Kuah Harbour, while the second day saw the "East Coast Courses" off Langkawi Island in choppy weather. The third day was the "West Coast Island" course while the fourth day saw the famed "Around the Islands" course, followed by a final "Kuah Harbour" race on the last day of the regatta. The wind held up every day and PRO James was able to get all races off on time without any postponement due to lack of wind.

The Prime Minister's Challenge Trophy for the Racing class this year went to Malaysia's Rolf Heemskerck on *The Next Factor* who beat out Nick Burns' *Blitz* (Hong Kong), by three points in the final tally. Noppakao Poonpat's *Vayu* came third, but as the TP52 was unable to compete on the first day due to rigging issues it missed the first three races – otherwise the final scores might have been much different.

The LADA-IRC Challenge Trophy for the IRC 1 class saw a flipflop from last year as Kazuki Kihara's *Char Chan* won seven out of ten races to capture the title with last year's winner Malaysia's *Mata Hari*, helmed by Vincent Chan, coming in second. Third place in this class went to Lee Yi Men's *Jolt* from Singapore.

The PSC-IRC 2 Challenge Trophy went to Niels Degenkolw's X-boat *Phoenix*, who sailed down from Phuket for the event, and won five of the nine races staged in this class. Last year's winner Jeremy Camps' *The Blue Angel* (Malaysia) placed second with Muhammed Izzad's PDRM Sailing Team (*Fortissimo*) coming in third.

The Malaysia Multihull Challenge Trophy was dominated by and swept by Phuket-based boats with John Newnham's *Twin Sharks* winning five of the nine races and capturing the class despite suffering structural damage on the first race. Dougal Jackson's Haruki placed second overall and David Liddell's *Wow* was third.

Commenting on the race, *Twin Sharks*' Alfie Rowson said, "*Twin Sharks* won our class for the third year in a row after getting off to a rocky start. On day one, our longitudinal beam between the main beam and aft beam parted ways at both ends. This supports the trampoline and many control lines. We made repairs on the fly and continued racing. With assistance from the Northern Shipyard, *Team Vayu*, and fellow competitors repairs we made ready for day two of racing. On day two, however, there were still gremlins and further repairs were required. The multihull fleet was a tightly fought competition with multiple boats in the mix. On the last day it was anyone's to play for, all the way down to the last race. We won despite sailing round an extra island. The good camaraderie in the multihull fleet not only showed on the water, but also on the dock."

The RLYC Commodore's Challenge Trophy went to *Dash*, helmed by Mohd Azhar, who took first place, winning eight of nine races in the class. The classic wooden boat *Suraya*, skippered by Selwyn Enoch, finishing second and Ilya Strakh's *Wind of Change* placed third.

And finally, the Langkawi Sports Challenge Trophy (the Sports Boats class) was won by the *Royal Selangor Yacht Club Racing Team*. Skipper Rizal Mahadi's boat won nine out of the ten races. Asmawi Azman's Navy 2 placed second, and Mohd Akiyuddin's Navy 1 was third in the class.





CHALLENGE TROPHY WINNERS

Prime Minister's Challenge Trophy – *The Next Factor*

LADA-IRC Challenge Trophy – *Char Chan*

PSC-IRC 2 Challenge Trophy – *Phoenix*

Malaysia Multihull Challenge Trophy – *Twin Sharks*

RLYC Commodore's Challenge Trophy – *Dash*

Langkawi Sports Challenge Trophy – *RSYC Racing Team*

Tunku Abdullah Sportsmanship Award – *Uranus*

The Tunku Abdullah Sportsmanship Award went to *Uranus* (the ATM Sailing Team) for stopping to assist the catamaran *Boreas* when it flipped over during the round-the-island race on day four. PRO Simon James did an excellent job of coordinating and directing the rescue effort with the police boat flipping the boat upright. *Boreas* hit something before the race, then heading downwind it had a steering problem, dropped its kite, put up a small kite, and dropped the jib, at which point they caught a gust and flipped. Luckily the only major injury was a broken collarbone to Karen Rowlands, but she courageously braved through the pain and discomfort.

The sponsors for the event were the Langkawi Development Authority (LADA), Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB) - an agency under Ministry of Tourism, Art and Culture Malaysia, Belt and Road Regatta (BRR), Kedah State Government, ALJ Global Sdn Bhd & Malaysia International Boat Show '25 Langkawi (MYBOS '25). The regatta is also supported by the supported by the Malaysia Sailing Association (MSA), World Sailing Aseanarean Bluewater Alliance.





MALAYSIA INTERNATIONAL BOAT SHOW '25 LANGKAWI



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info@mybos.my | www.mybos.my

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