An historic SYZ Translémanique en Solitaire

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The SYZ Translémanique en Solitaire race took place on a brand new course this year, with a buoy at Villeneuve, and under demanding conditions. François Thorens won the race in elapsed time with TBS, while Frederic Vandenberghe won in corrected time with Lovitana. The Junior' Translem, which took place at the same time, brought together 29 courageous young sailors!

The 2017 SYZ Translémanique en Solitaire - the 44th edition of the classic Lake Geneva race organised by the Société Nautique de Genève - will live on in the competitors' memories. For the first time, the race took place over a course that completely circled Lake Geneva, with a half-way mark positioned at the mouth of the Vieux Rhône. It also took place under demanding conditions. The wind was often sustained, but very irregular, which made for a fast race.

The elapsed-time winner, François Thorens, was extremely committed on board the Psaros 40 TBS. He led the flotilla of 107 sailboats (97 finished, 10 abandoned) for most of the day. He won in 12 hours, 13 minutes and 20 seconds, ahead of Oyster Funds (Nicolas Groux) and Fujin (Alain Gautier).

Thrilled with his victory, Thorens, who is originally from Tour de Peilz, explained that he managed his strategy particularly well "at home" in the upper lake. "I'm very happy with this victory," he said. "I purchased this sailboat two years ago and it's my first major victory with it." In the lead for most of the race, Thorens, who was taking part in his first Translémanique en Solitaire, won by a comfortable margin. Oyster Funds (Nicolas Groux) finished 33 minutes later while Fujin (Alain Gautier) finished 36 minutes behind the winner.

The SYZ Translémanique en Solitaire has historically crowned the corrected-time winner - a ratio which takes into account the characteristics of the sailboat and the race time. The winner of this category was also one of the smaller sailboats in the race: Frederic Vandenberghe's Lovitana, which finished in 16:09:16, a minute ahead of the 2015 winner, Alain Hostettler (Nicolas). Renaud Stitelmann took third place in a Surprise (Luna). "It was a great regatta!", said Vandenberghe after the race. "A very good edition, despite the difficult conditions. Especially in my small boat! I had to hike a lot during the race. And I can really feel my stomach muscles today...! The long course didn't scare me at all, thanks to the organisation, to Jean-Luc Lévêque and to all of the escort boats. We were well taken care of."

The top category, the Surprise, had 31 entries. It was won by a seasoned lake racer, Renaud Stittelmann, at the tiller of the Luna. He came in ahead of Laurent Alter (Cust 4) and René Mermod (Waventin), who also has a long history of winning races! Gilles Morelle won the Grand Surprise category with Sibuya, and the Egger, (Christophe Magnin) was the first Toucan to cross the finish line.

The Junior Translem race took place alongside the SYZ Translémanique en Solitaire. The race is open to young people between the ages of 8 and 15 sailing Optimists. There were 29 entries for the long-distance course between Geneva and Versoix. As a bonus, the sailors spent a night in a civil protection shelter in Versoix and enjoyed activities designed especially for them. The Junior’ Translem has become increasingly popular over the years!

Jean-Luc Lévêque, the Chairman of the organising committee, feted the qualities of the sailors who took part in the long race. "As there was wind nearly the entire time, the race was less tiring mentally than races in the past. On the other hand, it was very trying physically. Everything went very well from an organisational standpoint and the overall result is excellent."

Yann Petremand, Chairman of the Cercle de la Voile de la SNG, spent most of the night at the club welcoming competitors. He emphasised the positive attitude of the racers as they arrived during the night. "When we decided on this new course, we were concerned that there might be fewer competitors and that the choice wouldn't be popular with everyone. However, last night everyone had a big smile on their face. Everyone loved the course! The collaboration with the Cercle de la Voile de Villeneuve went very well and I would like to thank everyone."