



7015 Professional Parkway East
Sarasota, FL 34240
Phone: (941) 487-7904
Fax: (941) 706-3825

OFFICIAL MEDIA RELEASE

RELEASE CONTACT : Lucy Nicandri, Executive Director
(941) 706-3795 / lucy.nicandri@suncoastcc.org

RELEASE DATE: May 11, 2020

SARASOTA GRAND PRIX & OTHER RACE SITES POSTPONE UNTIL NEXT YEAR

Race site organizers, and the sanctioning organizations for the APBA Offshore National Championship Series, held a conference call last week to discuss the challenges many are facing due to the Coronavirus pandemic and future plans to move forward.

One of the major concerns facing all race sites this year is a decline in the number of race teams able to participate. Every international race team who participated last year indicated that they would not be able to race during this year's APBA Offshore National Championship Series. Various race teams based in the United States, and race site organizers, have also shared that they are faced with limited support from sponsors until more guidelines are announced pertaining to safe social distancing and future travel restrictions. After careful consideration, Sarasota has decided to join several other race sites within the series (such as St. Clair, MI and Michigan City, IN) by announcing a postponement of the Sarasota Powerboat Grand Prix until next year. The Lake Race in Lake Ozark, MO also announced postponing their race with no announcement yet surrounding a new date.

Lucy Nicandri, Executive Director for Suncoast Charities for Children, the local charity that produces the Grand Prix Festival stated: "In an effort to protect the integrity of the event and show respect to our sponsors, coupled with continued concerns surrounding managing proper social distancing and safety, we felt it would be in the best interest of everyone to postpone our race until next year. Suncoast Charities for Children is extremely grateful to Sarasota County, Visit Sarasota County, and the City of Sarasota for their continued support as we worked through this very difficult decision. Thanks to their support, and the support of so many other generous sponsors, the Sarasota Powerboat Grand Prix has been able to continue as a premier powerboat race for 35 years."

A total of 68 race teams participated in Sarasota last year making it one of the largest turnouts in recent years. In 2019 the Sarasota Powerboat Grand Prix Festival raised just over \$115,000 for Suncoast Charities for Children and generated an estimated economic impact of \$29.6 Million and 16,800 room nights. Visit Sarasota County is the Presenting Sponsor for the Sarasota Powerboat Grand Prix. Shelby Connett, Director of Sports for Visit Sarasota County added: "The Grand Prix is one of several major sporting events in the area having to postpone due to the effects of the recent pandemic. We fully support Suncoast Charities for Children's decision and agree that the safety of participants and fans always comes first. Sports tourism revenues, generated from large events like the Grand Prix, are extremely important. However, we understand the necessity for organizers to postpone not only for safety reasons, but also to ensure their ability to continue producing high-quality events in our community for years to come."

Powerboat P1 and Offshore Powerboat Association (OPA) are the sanctioning race organizations for the APBA Offshore National Championship Series. The date for next year's Sarasota Powerboat Grand Prix is scheduled for June 25-27, 2021. For more updates visit: sarasotapowerboatgrandprix.org