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LIMA-sailing

AMERICA ONE TAKES HOME MALAYSIA CHALLENGE TROPHY

LANGKAWI, Dec 7 (Bernama) -- America One, skippered by John Kostecki, cruised their way to emerge champion in the inaugural Malaysia Challenge 1997 International Sailing Grand Prix after defeating fellow countrymen, the Young America team, in the finals here today.

The team, which comprised Morgan Larson, Don Cowie and Alan Smith, bagged US\$21,000 and a trophy which was presented by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad onboard the luxury Star Pisces cruise vessel.

The Young America team, skippered by World Number Two Ed Baird, received US\$13,000 while Beau Geste from Hong Kong took the US\$10,000 third spot after defeating World Number One Peter Gilmour's Nippon Challenge.

"We have had an excellent race here and the winds were on our side," Kostecki said at the prize presentation ceremony.

"We are also very fortunate to have the Prime Minister to sail with us in the celebrity race (yesterday). He even gave us some tips," he said to the applause of those present including visiting Ghanaian president Jerry Rawlings.

The US\$100,000 Malaysia Challenge is held in conjunction with the six-day Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition (LIMA '97) which ended today.

Nine of the 29 top world sailing skippers took part in the race which began last Monday. -- Bernama

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