

Springfield, Ohio, June 10, 2023 – The University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez reclaimed the title of World Champion of Collegiate Solar Boating when collegiate engineering teams gathered at Champions Park Lake at the Clark County Fairgrounds to compete in the 29th annual SOLAR SPLASH® competition in Springfield, Ohio, June 6-10. Sponsored by UPS Battery Center, SOLAR SPLASH provides a showcase for the students' innovative boat designs and gives awards for endurance, sprint, and slalom on-the-water events, plus awards for technical reports, video presentation, workmanship, and engineering design. SOLAR SPLASH is a sanctioned American Power Boat Association event.

Each competitor is a student team that spends the previous year designing, constructing, and testing their solar boat. The boats, driven by a single skipper, vary greatly in appearance but must conform to size, power, and safety specifications. The boats compete in qualifying and endurance events with solar panels in place on the crafts. Skippers must be able to safely steer the boats around set courses. The same boats then compete in sprints but may have a different configuration which often does not include onboard solar panels. Batteries, however, must be charged by solar panels, some of which the students construct themselves. Rules for the event, as well as results and photos from the past 28 years, can be found at www.solarsplash.com.

After having lost the title the previous year to Cedarville University, the students from Puerto Rico at Mayaguez scored 953.74 points out of 1000 to take 1st place in the competition and receive the George Ettenheim Memorial World Championship Trophy. Their boat won the Sprint competition by completing the 300-meter course in 25.8 seconds. They also came in 2nd in the Endurance competition by completing 69.25 laps on the 590-meter course) in the four-hour competition. They also won the awards for the Qualifying and Slalom events.

Defending champion, Cedarville University, finished second overall with 932.73 points. Their boat won the Endurance competition, completing 77 laps in 4 hours. The University of Southern Indiana team finished in 3rd place overall.

Ample sunshine provided excellent conditions for the event. However, the participants did experience some hazy skies and questionable air quality resulting from the Canadian wildfires that have plagued the northeast US. The awards ceremony was held on Saturday afternoon. Teams received competition awards for their boats' performances as well as design awards as judged by teams of engineering judges. The Innovation award was given to the team from The College of New Jersey for their two speed selectable drive system.

Cooperation and teamwork are important elements in the event so a sportsmanship award, a teamwork award, and a perseverance award are given. This year those awards were won by Cedarville University, the Wroclaw (Poland) University of Science and Technology, and Carnegie Mellon University, respectively. The Most Improved Team award went to the University of Southern Indiana. The Video Presentation award went to Puerto Rico at Mayaguez. The winning video and all other submitted videos may be viewed on the [SOLAR SPLASH YouTube channel](#).

The students, typically numbering three to a dozen or more on each team, spend the five days in the tented paddock area or near the water while their boats perform. Launching and removing the boats from the water are group efforts from each team. Pre-launch inspections include safety checks and verification of certified batteries and radios for communication from shore with the skipper. While out of the water, teams must be ready for inspections by SOLAR SPLASH inspectors and by volunteer judges who question the teams regarding engineering decisions and designs.

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A morning meeting is held each day so event officials, called Redshirts, can update the students on the day's schedule and answer questions. Lunch is provided on site each day and the afternoon ice cream break is a favorite with the students and faculty advisors. An opening day welcome dinner is held each year on the first day of the event.

The first SOLAR SPLASH competition was held in Milwaukee in 1994. Eleven competitors participated that first year. Since the initial competition, more than 90 American universities, 11 international universities, and five high school teams have participated. Other competition locations have included New Orleans, Louisiana; Buffalo, New York; Fayetteville, Arkansas; Cedar Falls/Waterloo, Iowa; and Dayton, Ohio.

Champions Park Lake at the Clark County Fairgrounds in Springfield, Ohio will be the site of the competition again in 2024 on June 4-8.

SOLAR SPLASH is a trademark of Solar Splash Inc., a non-profit organization formed to promote engineering education and interest in solar innovation. Solar Splash Inc. seeks to involve college and high school students in hands-on educational activity by hosting the SOLAR SPLASH competition each year in late spring or early summer.

By partnering with engineering societies, corporate sponsors, and local volunteers, Solar Splash Inc. facilitates the event by managing competition rules, arranging for the competition site, and providing meals and extracurricular events for the students participating. SOLAR SPLASH "Redshirts" are the officials who manage the five-day event each year. Dr. Jeff Morehouse, Professor Emeritus – University of South Carolina; David Luneau, Professor Emeritus – University of Arkansas at Little Rock; and Dr. Roy Hogan, formerly of Sandia National Laboratories, are the engineering officials of the event.