

# Programme for Belize wins Masters Division again

The defending champions in the Masters division, the Programme for Belize team led by veteran Canadian paddler Bob Vincent, returned win 1st prize in the Masters division. Bob Vincent and his new teammates Dave and Ray, paddled across the finish line in 14th place clocking 2:59:56 on the 4th day, but their total time of wen 20:07:30 ranked them 15th overall.

The SeaSports "Jankunu" team of brothers Johnny 'Watt' and Michael Searle had lost their old teammate Charles Chavannes and now teamed up with Radisson Fort George hotel manager Jim Scott to paddle across the finish in 16th place, clocking 3:00:16 on the 4th day. Their total time of 20:27:38 put them at 19th overall, good enough to win 2nd prize in the Masters Division. They were sponsored by the Radisson Fort George Lamanai Fitness Center.

The Surprise canoe surprised everyone by taking 3rd prize in the Masters, Division clocking 21:03:29 to finish 27th overall.

The "Grumpy Old Men" canoe paddled by evergreen paddlers Jeremy Wilkins and Joe Fuzy have always given "Jankunu"

a run for their money, but this year they had to take a back seat to 3 guys from Austin, Texas. Free lance photographer Erich Schlegel, Steve Dailey and Tim Osburn are on holiday in Belize; it's Schlegel's 3rd visit and they just decide to give the Ruta Maya a shot in a canoe called "Jankunu River Dancers". Even though they capsized at the start of the 4th stage and were the last canoe to leave Burrell Boom, they clocked 3:25:21, crossing the finish line in 51st place, but their total time of 23:13:28 put them at 46th overall.

"Grumpy Old Men" Wilkins and Fuzy had recruited Martin Ortiz of Florida USA for this year's Ruta Maya, but Joe was injured during the race and his support crewman Ray Herrera, who had no paddling training took over and helped them to finish in a total time of 23:15:23 - 5th in the Masters Division, 49th overall.

It was not all in vain, as the Grumpy Old Men team had followed in the spirit of Ruta Maya founders to clean up and save the Belize River; each day when they pulled in to the landing, their canoe was full of the garbage they picked from the river banks along the way. This won them the race Environmental Award and free entry to the 2010 Ruta Maya.

