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Annapolis-to-Newport Race Website Launched; Entries Coming In

Charleston skipper makes mark as earliest entrant in the 70-year history of race

ANNAPOLIS, MD (August 10, 2014) – Joseph Hanna chuckled when told that he was now the answer to a trivia question. The Charleston, South Carolina sailor is the earliest entrant in the 70-year history of the prestigious Annapolis-to-Newport Race.

“That’s quite an honor. I laughed out loud when I was told that,” Hanna said. “That’s almost as good as winning the race.”

Under the direction of co-chairmen Dick Neville and Mark Myers, the Annapolis-to-Newport race committee is way ahead of schedule on a number of fronts. In the past, race documents were issued and entries were subsequently accepted around January of the calendar year in which Annapolis-Newport was being held.

That process has now been sped up by almost six months with the Notice of Race being posted to the official event website in early July. Hanna, owner of a Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 45.2, entered *Alexandria* in the 2015 Annapolis-to-Newport Race the morning after registration officially opened.

“Actually, I must confess that was somewhat of a coincidence. We’re planning our program two years in advance and Annapolis-Newport has been on my radar screen for a while,” Hanna said. “I’ve heard nothing but great things about the race. I know it’s unique and challenging, which is what we are looking for.”

Alexandria is a top-notch racer-cruiser that combines performance and comfort. Hanna has done well with the boat while participating in the Charleston Offshore Racing Association, placing second overall in 2013 and leading so far this season. He has competed in such overnight distance races as Charleston-Savannah, Charleston-Georgetown and the Gulfstreamer Race that begins off Daytona and ends off Charleston. He also captured class honors at Charleston Race Week in 2012.

Hanna has significant offshore experience, having also served as navigator aboard other boats for numerous point-to-point races, including Newport-to-Bermuda. He intends to do Annapolis-to-Newport Double-handed with close friend Toby Hemmerling, also a veteran of many offshore passages. Both sailors will be turning 45 in 2015 and Hanna said completing a new, different race will be a nice joint birthday present.

“We love Annapolis and we love Newport. So to sail from one to the other will be a blast!” Hanna said.

The official event website, annapolisnewportrace.com, launched last month and serves as one-stop shopping for all participants. All race documents can be found and online entry performed using the renowned YachtScoring program.

“In today’s world, people are making plans earlier and earlier. As a committee, we felt it was important to give owners an opportunity to view the Notice of Race and go through the registration process earlier than ever before,” Myers said. “We are very excited to be using Yacht Scoring so that all the key information is located in one place.”

At press time, there were already five entries for the 35th biennial Annapolis-to-Newport Race, which will start June 5 and 6 off Annapolis. Those skippers all took advantage of the early entry discount, which remains in place until Dec. 1, 2014.

Another notable entry comes from J/World Annapolis, which will race the highly-successful J/120 Euro Trash Girl with a team of students. Nicole Weaver, who donated the boat to J/World, skippered *Euro Trash Girl* to victory in PHRF 1 class in the 2005 Annapolis-Newport.

Kristen Berry, co-director of J/World Annapolis, said the crew will be comprised of six students that complete the company’s offshore racing program. Those students will compete in a couple of preparatory distance races such as Fort Lauderdale-to-Key West. Berry and fellow director Jeff Jordan, who helped *Fireball* win PHRF 1 and capture the C. Gaither Scott Trophy in the 2013 Annapolis-to-Newport Race, will be among three coaches onboard.

“We are going to do an extensive amount on-water training to make sure the students are adequately prepared for a challenging offshore passage such as Annapolis-Newport,” Berry said. “During the race, everyone will do everything. The students will rotate through all positions on the boat so they get the full experience.”

Organizers with Annapolis Yacht Club have added a Performance Cruising Class, which is designed to introduce distance racing to a different segment of sailors. *Alexandria*, the Jeanneau Sun Odyssey, fits that category. So is *Jubilee*, a Beneteau 36.7 owned by Herrington Harbour Sailing Association member Keith Mayes, which is among the early entries.

Newport Yachting Center will serve as race headquarters on the finishing end and Annapolis Yacht Club has reserved a large number of discounted slips for Annapolis-Newport race boats. Located in the heart of downtown Newport with easy access to shopping and dining, the marina features 180 floating finger piers, on-site repair service, 24-hour security, a professional staff and all sorts of other amenities.

Organizers will set up a race office, press office and hospitality tent at the Newport Yachting Center for the convenience of sailors. Participating skippers can reserve dockage beginning on February 1, 2015.

Visit the official event website: <http://annapolisnewportrace.com>

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