



PRESS RELEASE

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Excitement Building for 38th Biennial Annapolis to Newport Race Entries Rolling in After Notice of Race Posted on New Year's Eve

Annapolis, MD (January 12, 2021) — Will Passano III entered the [Annapolis to Newport Race](#) within minutes of receiving the email announcing registration was open.

The Gibson Island resident was anxious to lock down his 2021 racing schedule and Annapolis to Newport was an important piece of the puzzle.

“This race is a great way to get the boat to Newport, where we plan to spend the summer,” explained Passano, who will then do the Marblehead to Halifax Race, Edgartown Race Week and the Around the Island Race.

Following a year in which major offshore distance races throughout the world were canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic, Passano and other diehard practitioners of that type of sailboat racing are chomping at the bit.

Host Annapolis Yacht Club posted the Notice of Race for the 38th edition of this biennial classic on New Year's Eve, and within just a few days more than two dozen boats had signed up.

“I just think there are a lot of sailors who want to go racing,” said Jim Praley, Chairman of the 2021 Annapolis to Newport Race. “There's a lot of pent-up frustration from not being able to get out on the water as much last year due to COVID.”

This will be the fifth A2N for Passano, who made his debut way back in 1981 aboard his father and namesake's Rhodes 41 named *Pegasus*. In 2011, he crewed aboard *ICAP Leopard*, a 100-foot maxi designed by Farr and Associates.

In 2015 and 2017, Passano and a crew of close friends campaigned a J/37 named *Carina* in Annapolis to Newport. That 2015 edition was memorable because Passano had failed to realize his daughter's high school graduation was the same day as the A2N start.

Principal Race Officer Dick Neville approved *Carina's* late start – six hours after the rest of the Friday fleet. Strong strategy combined with a little luck enabled the J/37 to place second in the Performance Cruising 1 class.

Passano recently purchased a Sydney 47 from an Australian owner and it was delivered just before Thanksgiving. It is currently being outfitted at Bert Jabin's Yacht Yard in Annapolis and will make its maiden voyage in the Spring Race to Oxford, co-organized by AYC and Tred Avon Yacht Club. The Storm Trysail Club Down the Bay Race will serve as a stiffer shakedown for the speedy sloop, which twice captured class honors in the Sydney-Hobart Race under previous owner Noel Cornish.

Passano has renamed the new boat *Polaris* and described it as a rocket ship. He is eager to see how she performs against the likes of *Rival* (Carkeek 40) and *Wahoo* (Ker 50).

"We're looking for a quick trip to Newport. It's all about the tactics of getting out of the bay and the strategy out in the ocean," Passano said. "This boat is a big learning curve for me and my crew. We'll have to get up to speed quickly in order to maximize its capabilities offshore."

The 38th biennial Annapolis to Newport Race will start June 4th and 5th on the Chesapeake Bay. AYC has streamlined the registration process so all entry requirements or paperwork can be completed online by email or fax.

Skippers will need only make a socially distanced visit to AYC to pick up their YB tracker before getting underway.

Due to the current public health climate in Maryland and Rhode Island, Annapolis Yacht Club is unable to commit to the social components of the event at this time. The popular pre-start "All Hands Party" at AYC along with the traditional Annapolis to Newport Race Competitor's Party and Trophy Presentation could be held if conditions improve.

For now, organizers are operating as though the parties will not be possible and therefore the entry fee has been reduced significantly to \$700 per boat. By comparison, a 40-foot vessel paid a \$1,400 entry fee in 2019.

"The social side is nice, but we don't need that in 2021. Let's get COVID behind us," Passano said. "I complement the Race Committee for recognizing those concerns and dropping the fee accordingly."

If restrictions on social gatherings are lifted come June, social events could be added to the schedule and sailors will be charged on a per person basis separate from the entry fee. If the awards party cannot be held in-person, trophies will be presented virtually.

Also being held virtually via the Zoom platform is the interesting and informative A2N "What to Expect" seminar series. Seminar 1 on Sails, Rigging and Electronics is scheduled for Saturday, February 20 at 10:00 a.m.

Annapolis Yacht Club will be offering starts to boats rated under the ORC and PHRF rules systems. Those will include an ORC Double-handed division and a Classic Yacht class that will race PHRF. Rating certificates issued by ORC or PHRF of the Chesapeake will be required.

Due to the pandemic, US Sailing has canceled all in-person Safety-at-Sea trainings until at least the third quarter of this year. Certificates that expired in 2020 or will expire in 2021 are being automatically extended through the end of the year. US Sailing offers an online Safety-at-Sea training, which AYC will accept for the 2021 A2N in lieu of an in-person course.

Jay Hansen was another owner who was quick to enter the 2021 Annapolis to Newport Race. The Jamestown, Rhode Island resident bought an Azuree 46 in 2018 with the primary purpose of cruising with his wife.

Hansen, who retired following a distinguished career with North Sails, had to withdraw from the 2019 Marion to Bermuda Race due to a structural issue discovered at the last moment.

Of course, last year was almost a total wash thanks to COVID with the Conanicut Yacht Club member completing just one race aboard *Imagine* – the Around the Island Race that is a staple on Narragansett Bay.

“I absolutely love long distance racing and I’m very excited about doing Annapolis to Newport,” said Hansen, former Chief Operating Officer for the North Technology Group.

Hansen started an A2N aboard a Farr 40 that sustained a broken rudder just before exiting the Chesapeake Bay. He’s looking forward to finally finishing the 475-nautical mile passage and adding Annapolis to Newport to the 11 Newport-Bermuda races he’s completed.

The Azuree 46 is a twin-rudder, racer-cruiser designed by Rob Humphries and constructed by Turkish builder Sirena. It has a narrow plumb bow, wide transom and bulbed fin keel – ideal for power reaching offshore.

“I love how the boat sails. It’s quite quick for its size and has a good sail area to displacement ratio. It performs great in heavy air,” Hansen said.

Hansen plans to compete in Annapolis to Newport and Marion to Bermuda with a five-man crew whose average age is 65. He intentionally limited the number of sailors aboard so that “everyone stays busy” and has a rule that no one has to ever sit on the rail.

“All these guys have been friends for 40, 50, even 60 years. There is a camaraderie aspect because it’s fun to go sailing with people you like,” said Hansen, 71. “I’m not particularly concerned with the result because we’re a bunch of old men. I have to be realistic that we can’t push the boat like we would with nine younger sailors. I just want to sail the boat as well as possible.”

Hansen said he “could not care in the least” if Annapolis Yacht Club is unable to conduct parties or operate the hospitality tent at Newport Yachting Center. He related a conversation he had with a lead organizer of the Marion to Bermuda Race, which sent out a survey asking if participants would be upset if parties were not held due to COVID.

“I was told the overwhelming majority of responders said: Let’s just go racing. We’re not worried about the social activities,” Hansen said.

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