



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Organizers of the Annapolis-to-Newport Race create a new competition aimed at developing the next generation of offshore sailors

ANNAPOLIS, MD (April 27, 2015) – The inaugural Youth Challenge Trophy will be presented following the 35th edition of the Annapolis-to-Newport Race, which begins June 5, 2015 and has already attracted 85 entries. Skippers interested in vying for the special award must race with a crew that includes a minimum of three sailors that are under 25 years of age at the start of the race. Service academy entries are not eligible for this challenge.

“Our goal is to encourage owners to take younger sailors offshore,” said Dick Neville, co-chairman of the 2015 Annapolis-to-Newport Race. “Young people don’t get many opportunities to do this type of racing. The Annapolis Yacht Club is very committed to getting the next generation of sailors interested in ocean racing and this new trophy is one way to do so.”

Neville pointed to the lone American entry in the Volvo Ocean Race as an example of how such an endeavor can succeed. Skipper Charlie Enright and watch captain Mark Towill were introduced to offshore racing through the innovative Morning Light program. That project famously trained a group of sailors between the ages of 18 and 23 to compete in the 44th Transpacific Yacht Race aboard a TP52 named *Morning Light*. Roy Disney served as executive producer of a feature film that followed the program from start to finish and was released to rave reviews in 2008.

That experience sparked a passion for offshore sailing that ultimately led Enright and Towill to form Team Alvimedica, which is currently racing toward its home port of Newport, R.I. Team Alvimedica accomplished a major milestone by leading the six-boat fleet around Cape Horn en route to placing third in Leg 5 from Auckland, New Zealand to Itajai, Brazil and stands fourth in the overall standings.

“The ultimate goal is to grow the sport of sailing and the best way to do that is to foster a lifelong interest in the sport in young people,” Neville said. “It is the responsibility of all distance race organizers to give youngsters the opportunity and incentive to go offshore.”

The Storm Trysail Club recently unveiled a similar competition for the 50th anniversary edition of Block Island Race Week. The GEM Trophy, named in honor of the late William Ziegler III, will be presented to the top performing boat that has at least 70 percent of its crew comprised of sailors younger than 25 years of age.

Skippers entering the Youth Challenge Trophy competition for the Annapolis-to-Newport Race can convey that intention by clicking on the “Notes” tab that is part of the entry form found at www.yachtscoring.com. Deadline to register for the Youth Challenge Trophy is May 15.

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