



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Organizers of the Annapolis-to-Newport Race are strongly encouraging participating boats to enter the Down the Bay Race – begins Friday, May 22**

ANNAPOLIS, MD (May 12, 2015) – Scott Ward is a veteran ocean racer, having sailed his Beneteau 40.7 named Crocodile in dozens of major distance events. Despite having significant experience, Ward still always conducts some sort of shakedown voyage before ever heading offshore. That’s because the Dowell, Maryland resident knows better than anyone that things can and will go wrong over the course of a multi-day voyage.

Ward wants to make sure all the systems aboard his boat are operating properly and that his crew is prepared for a wide range of crisis situations or unexpected emergencies. Which is why Ward has entered Crocodile in the 66<sup>th</sup> Down the Bay Race later this month. He is using the Hampton Yacht Club and Storm Trysail Club’s renowned competition for the Virginia Cruising Cup as preparation for the 2015 Annapolis-to-Newport Race, which begins June 5 on the Chesapeake Bay.

“I cannot stress enough how important it is to do some sort of overnight point-to-point sailing, preferably in race mode, before going offshore,” Ward said. “We did the Down the Bay Race last year before competing in the Newport-to-Bermuda Race and it helped tremendously.”

Organizers with the Annapolis-to-Newport Race are strongly encouraging participating boats to enter the Down the Bay Race, which begins Friday, May 22. The 120-nautical mile passage from Annapolis to Hampton provides skippers and crews with a wide range of challenges and will produce knowledge and information that should prove useful a couple weeks later when it comes time to start a much lengthier voyage, said Annapolis-to-Newport Race co-chairman Dick Neville.

“One of the toughest legs of the Annapolis-to-Newport Race is the Chesapeake Bay portion. Getting out of the bay can prove quite challenging as you are confronted with a lot of unique elements such as current, depth issues and commercial traffic,” Neville said. “The Down the Bay Race provides an ideal opportunity to practice sailing at night, operating a watch system, performing navigation and dealing with feeding the crew multiple meals.”

Neville said a long overnight distance race such as Down the Bay is particularly important for first-time entrants in Annapolis-to-Newport.

“I cannot stress strongly enough how important it is to conduct some sort of shakedown and racing to Hampton is an excellent way to learn the Chesapeake Bay winds and tides,” Neville said. “Down the Bay is perfect training for Annapolis-to-Newport as it gives crews a chance to sort out any potential problems.”

Ward said he doesn’t worry about winning the Down the Bay Race, but rather devotes time to refining crew work, testing equipment and reviewing safety procedures.

“We’ll hoist every sail in the inventory to make sure they are in good shape and to give the crew plenty of practice doing it at night. I highly recommend putting up the storm trysail,” Ward said. “We’ll perform various safety checks, test the emergency steering system and do a bunch of boat calibration.”

To enter the Down the Bay Race, visit [www.hamptonyc.com/downthebay](http://www.hamptonyc.com/downthebay)

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