



ANNAPOLIS YACHT CLUB

PRESS RELEASE

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Storm Trysail Club and ORC Join 37th Running of Annapolis to Newport Race

Annapolis, MD (January 11, 2019) — As navigator in 2017 aboard the J/120 *Shinnecock*, Jim Praley was disappointed to be nipped for class honors by the smallest of margins.

Rosalita, a J/109 owned by Rick Hanson, captured PHRF 2 by just two minutes on corrected time – overtaking *Shinnecock* despite crossing the finish line almost three hours later.

However, as event chairman, Praley was thrilled because *Rosalita* was a first-time entry in the Annapolis-to-Newport Race. Hanson was making his offshore debut after doing distance races on the Chesapeake Bay for eight years.

“This is our first time taking the boat offshore, so it goes without saying that we are extremely pleased with this result,” said Hanson, who co-skipped *Rosalita* along with his son Kyle. “Annapolis-to-Newport was on our bucket list. Just completing the race is an accomplishment. Winning is the icing on the cake.”

Host Annapolis Yacht Club has worked very hard to introduce its signature event to a new audience, so the success story of *Rosalita* was very encouraging to organizers. Hanson may have been encouraged give A2N a try after attending a series of seminars that helped first-time participants prepare for the passage between two of the most historic seaports on the East Coast.

“We have put considerable time and effort into making Annapolis-to-Newport more accessible and convincing sailors that it’s not as daunting an undertaking as some might think,” Praley said. “We had a large number of first-time entries two years ago and the feedback we received from some of those skippers was very positive.”

AYC has posted the Notice of Race and is now officially accepting entries for the 37th Annapolis-to-Newport Race, which starts June 7 and 8 on the Chesapeake Bay. All documents and online entry for the biennial event can be found at the following link: yachtscoring.com/emenu.cfm?eID=6105.

Praley is once again serving as A2N chairman and said most of the innovations introduced in recent years – such as staggered starts, the seminar series, and an emphasis on attracting cruising sailboats – will continue in 2019.

“We’re not making a whole lot of changes this time around because we think we have a pretty solid formula,” he said.

One notable change is the addition of Storm Trysail Club as a supporting partner. Annapolis Yacht Club is the organizing authority for the venerable event but has always received assistance from the

Naval Academy Sailing Squadron and Ida Lewis Yacht Club. Now, Storm Trysail Club, founded in 1938 and dedicated to blue water sailing, will lend its expertise.

“We are excited to bring aboard the Storm Trysail Club, which has such a sterling reputation for race management,” Praley said. “Members of the STC Newport Station will assist with monitoring the finish line and providing hospitality.”

Praley also announced the addition of ORC scoring for the 2019 Annapolis-to-Newport Race. This past year, Annapolis Yacht Club added the handicap rule developed by the Offshore Racing Congress for all its big boat events and this decision merely continues that commitment.

“ORC is growing in popularity, particularly here on the Chesapeake Bay,” Praley commented. “It’s a very viable measurement system that is simpler to implement than some of the others.”

Scoring for A2N will also be conducted under the IRC, ORR, and PHRF rating systems. Special classes will be offered for Performance Cruiser, Classic Yachts, Multihull, and Double-handed provided enough entries are submitted to form a viable start.

Annapolis Yacht Club has actively promoted the Performance Cruising division and succeeded in attracting a new wave of competitors. A Hanse 371, Tartan 3500, Beneteau 473, Oceanis 45, C&C 110, Baltic 38, and Dehler 36 were among many cruising designs that entered the 2015 and 2017 editions of Annapolis-to-Newport.

“We still believe attracting those cruiser-racer types of boats is important, and we must continue to find ways to make the race more appealing to that market,” Praley said. “There has been a resurgence of that type of racing, not only on Chesapeake, but on the entire East Coast.”

One of the more popular alterations AYC has made to A2N has been separate starting sequences based on handicap ratings. Smaller and slower boats will start on Friday, June 7, while the larger and faster boats will start on Saturday, June 8. This format has succeeded in getting the entire fleet into Newport in closer proximity and led to increased attendance at the prize-giving ceremony.

“We’ve had almost universal praise from skippers regarding the 24-hour separation in start times,” Praley said. “We had a very good turnout at the awards party in 2015 and 2017, which was the primary goal.”

Praley emphasized that both the Friday and Saturday start fleets would sail the exact same course with boats being required to round Chesapeake Light in the Atlantic Ocean before turning north toward Newport.

In February, Annapolis Yacht Club will conduct the first of several seminars designed to help skippers and crew prepare for the 475-nautical mile race. Provisioning, navigation and weather routing, and safety equipment are among the important topics that will be discussed with various industry professionals providing expert advice.

“These seminars have been very helpful and informative, even for veteran racers. You always walk away having learned something new,” said Praley, who is set to participate in his seventh Annapolis-to-Newport. “If you are a newcomer to the race, the seminars take away a lot of the mystery.”

Newport Yachting Center will once again serve as primary venue in Newport with the facility offering discounted slip fees to all A2N competitors. Annapolis Yacht Club will erect a large hospitality tent on-site and host nightly cocktail parties.

“This is a classic ocean race and we’re thrilled that it continues to thrive,” Praley said. “It is one of the most unique distance races as it features three parts – transiting and exiting the Chesapeake Bay, the ocean leg to Block Island, and the final sprint to Newport.”

Annapolis Yacht Club recently reopened its main clubhouse that was rebuilt following a devastating fire in December of 2015. Many visiting sailors will get their first glimpse of the clubhouse during the Competitor’s Send-off Party on Thursday, June 6. Registration will take place in AYC’s new Sailing Center which is located in Eastport, directly across Spa Creek from the Clubhouse.

“I think if you are just starting ocean racing, this is the perfect event because of the assistance the club provides and the venue on both ends,” Praley said.

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