

Sailing Superstars Compete in SAILING Champions League Semifinal in Porto Cervo

Hamburg/Porto Cervo, 28 May 2018 – The SAILING Champions League 2018 kicks off on Thursday with a semifinal contest in Porto Cervo, Sardinia. Teams from 24 clubs representing 13 nations fight in Porto Cervo (31 May to 3 June) for one of 15 spots for the big SAILING Champions League Final in St. Moritz, Switzerland, end of August.

Teams are coming from all corners of Europe including Slovenia for the first time, but with a strong contingent from the Nordic and central European countries.

Among the strongest contenders with a proven track record in Porto Cervo is the club from Switzerland, Regattaclub Bodensee, which finished runner-up at the SAILING Champions League Final last season. Former Olympic 470 sailor Julian Flessati brings a strong crew to see if they can win this time on these azure waters.

Among those taking part in the SAILING Champions League for the first time are the Royal Yacht Club Monaco, which is putting out an extremely accomplished team skippered by François Brenac whose CV is peppered with victories in major championships. The three-time Olympic campaigner for France has won world titles in the J/22 and J/80 keelboats and two campaigns for France in the America's Cup. The front of his boat is no less impressive, including two of France's greatest 49er Olympic skiff competitors, Stéphane Christidis on tactics and Yann Rocherieux on mainsail trim. Newcomers they may be, but a crew of this pedigree has every chance of winning at its first attempt.

Representing Norway is Moss Seilforening with accomplished multihull sailor, Formula 18 competitor Karl-Einar Jensen proving in recent years that he's also very well adapted to the short-course keelboat competition format of League sailing, while Finland's Åländska Segelsällskapet is a serious contender for victory in Sardinia, as well. Among Daniel Mattsson's crew is Staffan Lindberg, one of the best match racers in the world and well qualified to call tactics for the Finnish team.

According to Edoardo Recchi, Sports Director from the YCCS, there are no secret ingredients to success in the SAILING Champions League. "Just a lot of training and good teamwork. One of the most important things is starting at full throttle. You have to be awake from the very start and be ready to win the moment the first gun sounds." Since the beginning, the YCCS has been a big supporter of the SAILING Champions League and the league concept. "We organised the SAILING Champions League event in Italy in 2015 because we believe in the format. We felt that a serious challenge between clubs from all over the world was missing from our calendar at that time", explains Recchi.

The YCCS regatta is the first of two semifinals, with the second semifinal due to be hosted by St. Petersburg Yacht Club in Russia from 3 to 6 August, just a few weeks before the 2018 Final which will be hosted for the first time by Segel-Club St. Moritz, high up in the Swiss Alps from 30 August to 2 September.

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Live broadcasting by SAP

As with all SAILING Champions League events, the semifinal in Porto Cervo will be live broadcasted by SAP and *SailTracks* for the final two days of competition. You can follow the racing live on Saturday and Sunday at 12:00hrs (CEST) on sailing-championsleague.com. The SAP Sailing Analytics provide 24/7 additional statistics and data for sailors, fans, spectators and media like GPS tracking, real-time analysis, live leaderboard combined with 2D visualisation. You find all results on sapsailing.com!

For further information see the SAP Media Kit.

Watch the teaser of Semifinal #1 here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=jrL3lqJGkj4

The clubs competing in Semifinal #1 at Porto Cervo are:

1	Austria	Burgenländischer Yacht Club
2	Austria	Yacht Club Bregenz
3	Denmark	Kongelig Dansk Yachtklub
4	Denmark	Hellerup Sejlklub
5	Finland	Åländska Segelsällskapet
6	France	APCC Nantes
7	France	Société des Régates d'Antibes
8	Germany	Segel- und Motorboot Club Überlingen
9	Germany	Wassersportverein Hemelingen
10	Italy	Circolo della Veta Bari
11	Italy	Società Canottieri Garda Salò
12	Lithuania	SVK Platu 25
13	Lithuania	RS 280
14	Monaco	Royal Yacht Club Monaco (wild card)
15	Netherlands	Jachtclub Schevenigen
16	Netherlands	WSV Giesbeek
17	Norway	Moss Seilforening
18	Slovenia	JK Aurora
19	Slovenia	AJK FPP
20	Slovenia	JK MIPC
21	Sweden	Malmö Segelsällskapet
22	Sweden	Cape Crow Yacht Club
23	Switzerland	Regattaclub Bodensee
24	Switzerland	Regattaclub Oberhofen

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Background Notes for Editors

PAST WINNERS OF SAILING CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

2017: Yacht Club Costa Smeralda, Italy
2016: Deutscher Touring Yacht-Club, Germany
2015: Kongelig Norsk Seilforening, Norway
2014: Kongelig Dansk Yachtklub, Denmark

HOW DOES THE SAILING CHAMPIONS LEAGUE WORK?

The most successful National Sailing League clubs compete against each other in three SAILING Champions League events, two semi-finals and then a Final. Each club forms a team from its most accomplished sailors. To win the title and the much sought-after trophy, the clubs have to perform under pressure and put in a world-class performance when it matters most. Short races, one-design boats, a standardised course and a competition between the most prestigious sailing clubs in the world - all these ingredients combine to guarantee sailing at its best.

THE IDEA BEHIND SAILING CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

It's a straightforward format that has been working well in football for years; now we have clear proof that it also works for sailing: *An international club competition generating high levels of media interest and a competition that clubs, sailors and fans can all identify with.*

The idea behind SAILING Champions League is simple: it's the championship of the national champions. The most successful clubs of the National Sailing League countries are competing against each other to fight for the title: "Best Sailing Club of the Year".

WHY NATIONAL SAILING LEAGUES?

The SAILING Champions League is based on the same proven and successful format of National Sailing Leagues. It all started out with a bold experiment in 2013 with the creation of the German Sailing League in 2013. The format was the brainchild of consulting and holding company "Konzeptwerft" in conjunction with some of the leading German sailing clubs as well as the German Sailing Association.

The concept took off like wildfire and it wasn't long before it started capturing the attention of sailors in other countries. The organisers of the German Sailing League started getting several serious inquiries from all around Europe and even from the USA. In 2014, Denmark became the first European country to adopt the format of a National Sailing League along the lines of the German model. As of 2018, 17 countries in Europe and the USA are running their own National Sailing Leagues. The logical conclusion of this trend? One international League for the national champions and the best of the National Sailing Leagues – the SAILING Champions League.

YOUTH SAILING AND WOMEN'S SAILING CHAMPIONS LEAGUES

Following the exponential growth of the League format, the next obvious steps were to create special Leagues for Youth and Women's competition. So for the first time in 2018 we see sailors competing in the Youth SAILING Champions League and Women's SAILING Champions League. It's all about making league sailing as accessible and attractive as possible to a wider group of sailors, as well as increasing the appeal to sponsors and commercial partners.

HISTORY OF SAILING CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

In 2013, the consulting and holding company "Konzeptwerft" in Hamburg revolutionised the sport of sailing in Germany. For the first time the clubs raced directly against each other in a friendly competition called the National Sailing League. The concept took the ages-old tradition of "club versus club" and turned that friendly rivalry into a competition that immediately caught the interest of sailors

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around the country. It ignited a passion for inter-club competition that hadn't previously existed. This enthusiasm not only caught the attention of the nationwide sailing community but also regional and nationwide media.

With a TV live stream as well as in-depth race analysis provided by SAP Sailing Analytics, fans and indeed anyone interested in sailing can follow each race of the National Sailing Leagues in real time on the internet. A panel of sailing experts and professional TV presenters bring all the action and excitement directly to people's homes and sailing clubs around the country.

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