

Qualification Battle at Semifinal #2 of SAILING Champions League in Saint Petersburg

Hamburg/St Petersburg, 01 August 2018 – With football fever still fresh in the memory, now Saint Petersburg Yacht Club and Russia’s most beautiful city get ready to host 24 international clubs representing 12 nations at Semifinal #2 of the SAILING Champions League 2018. With four days of racing scheduled from 3 to 6 August, the setting - right in the centre of St Petersburg - couldn’t be more spectacular. The top 16 clubs win a ticket for the big Final of SAILING Champions League in St. Moritz, Switzerland (30 August to 2 September).

The famous Peter and Paul Fortress could hardly be a more appropriate setting, as the teams do battle for a highly-coveted place in the Finals of the SAILING Champions League, set to take place at the end of this month in St Moritz, high up in the Swiss Alps. 16 clubs have a chance to make it through to the Finals, so it will be all about finishing in the top half of the eight-boat heats.

Some of the competitors were in St Petersburg only a few weeks ago when they were sailing into the finish of the 1,000 nautical-mile Nord Stream Race through the Baltic Sea. Sergey Musikhin was co-skipper of the winning boat representing Russia, and three weeks after winning Nord Stream Race 2018 in a powerful ClubSwan 50 racer-cruiser, the 35-year-old is back at the helm of his team, Lord of the Sail - Asia.

Another skipper from the long offshore race is Kris Houmann and his crew from Frederikshavn Sejlklub, a small sailing club in Northern Denmark which frequently punches above its weight. Tactician Rasmus Damsgaard is delighted to be back in Russia’s second city for some close, boat-on-boat action: “Coming back to St. Petersburg is a great pleasure! It’s a very beautiful city and a spectacular scenery to be sailing right in the middle of the city. Even though it will be very tricky to qualify for the finals in St. Moritz, we hope to make it with a top five result!”

The strong current of the fast-flowing Neva River will play a strong role in the strategy and tactics used by the teams for advantage around the race course. Saint Petersburg Yacht Club (SPBYC) is hosting SAILING Champions League for the third consecutive year. With support from main partner Gazprom, SPBYC presents sailing at its best in the maritime capital of Russia with the locals always ready to support the best European clubs racing close to shore.

Elena Solovyeva, project manager of SPBYC, explains: “The venue is one of the most outstanding sailing stadiums in the world and was used for hosting events like Extreme Sailing Series and World Match Racing Tour. The city centre provides an amazing scenery for sailing but is also a really tricky racing area. Neva river with its famous 3-knots current surrounded by the city walls – the wind is changing both force and direction. The teams have to look around 360 degrees all the time to seek for any chance to gain speed. Two years of

SCL racing here show that even after a bad start you can still win a race or lose it after a good start.”

Crews are representing the following countries: Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Russia, Slovenia, Sweden and Switzerland.

Livestream and results by SAP

As with all SAILING Champions League events, the final two days of racing on Sunday and Monday will be live broadcasted by SAP from 12:00 hrs (UTC+3), with expert commentators providing blow-by-blow analysis of the racing, aided by the detail provided by SAP Sailing Analytics. 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!

You can follow the action on Sunday here: youtube.com/watch?v=l8KK7_YUF7I

You can follow the action on Monday here: youtube.com/watch?v=FkdTkQVIOR8

To follow all the action online, tune into the livestream on Sunday and Monday. This will be available on Facebook, YouTube and also on www.sailing-championsleague.com.

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Background Notes for Editors

PAST WINNERS OF SAILING CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

2018 – Women’s SCL: Kongelig Dansk Yachtklub, Denmark

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 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