



Season Opener at the Bayerischer Yacht-Club: SAILING Champions League Launches its 13th Season on Lake Starnberg

Starnberg, May 14, 2026 – *The SAILING Champions League (SCL) is set to embark on its 13th season. This coming weekend, 18 teams from ten nations will gather at the Bayerischer Yacht-Club (BYC) on Lake Starnberg to compete for a spot in the World Final, held in Kiel this October. At stake is the prestigious title of "Best Sailing Club of the Year".*

The Return of the Qualifier Format

Following a brief hiatus, the Qualifier format returns for 2026 to accommodate the league's rapid international expansion. With the successful 2024 launch of the American Sailing League and the continued growth of national leagues worldwide, the demand for starting spots has reached an all-time high. In Starnberg, the second- and third-placed teams (and nominees) from the 2025 national leagues of Austria, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Bulgaria, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Poland will face off. The top five finishers will secure their tickets to the SCL Final in Kiel, where they will meet national champions and elite teams from the USA and the Asia-Pacific region.

Key factor of the league format: Identical Conditions with Tactics Over Tech

To ensure maximum fairness, all teams compete on an identical fleet of J/70 boats provided by the organizers. Crews rotate between boats after every race, with six teams competing simultaneously in high-frequency "flights." This format ensures that tactical precision and team performance are the sole deciding factors, as even minor mistakes in these short, intense races are penalized immediately.

A High-Density Field of Seasoned Veterans

Lake Starnberg is set to host a top-tier international fleet. Leading the charge is Mühlenberger Segel-Club (GER), returning with skipper Max Augustin and Benjamin Ahlers on board, the club that finished as runner-up for Best Club of the Year in the SAILING Champions League last season. From Switzerland, Simon Kaiser of Segel-Club Stäfa makes the trip to Bavaria, having claimed third place at the Youth SCL three times in a row, and is among the names worth watching in the open league as well. Dutch skipper Merel Groeneweg of WSV Giesbeek (NED) brings her own ambitions to the start line: Runner-up at the 2025 Women's SCL, she is looking to go one better against the Alpine backdrop. All signs point to tight battles between seasoned SCL campaigners and a new wave of challengers eager to make their mark.

Light Winds and Alpine Panoramas

Located in the Bavarian Alpine foothills, Lake Starnberg is renowned as a challenging light-wind arena. Strategic thermal conditions and unpredictable wind shifts characterize the racing area, all set against the backdrop of the Alps.



For teams from Southern Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, these conditions are a familiar part of their national league experience.

Tradition Meets Ambition: Debut for the BYC

Founded in 1888 and boasting nearly 1,000 members, the Bayerischer Yacht-Club is the oldest and largest sailing club in Southern Germany. While the club is a long-standing powerhouse in the German Sailing National League (Deutsche Segel-Bundesliga), this event marks its debut as an SCL host. In its dual role as host and competitor, the BYC is fielding two high-performance teams for the home event.

"We are looking forward to our dual role as host and participant, anticipating wind-filled races, and hoping that all teams feel at home here on Lake Starnberg while celebrating a great sporting competition," says Nils Sternberg, Sportmanager of the Bayerischer Yacht-Club.

The club's historic grounds and iconic wooden buildings at the northern end of the lake will provide the setting for the international weekend, featuring a traditional Bavarian beer party and an official event dinner.

Follow all the action live: sailing-championsleague.com

About the SAILING Champions League: <https://sailing-championsleague.com/about/>

Pictures per club/country:

<https://konzeptwerft.smugmug.com/SAILINGChampionsLeague/2026/Qualifier-BYC-/PRESS-c-SAILING-ENERGY> (Credit: SAILING Champions League / Sailing Energy)

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