

Press Release

Royal Western Yacht Club

7th January 2013

‘2009 OSTAR winner set to defend title’

The fleet in this year’s Original Single-handed Transatlantic Race, OSTAR, is all set to leave Plymouth in little over four months from now on Monday 27th May. This will be 14th edition of the Royal Western Yacht Club’s classic battle across the North Atlantic. Which, still remains the focus for every adventurous solo sailor who can not resist the unique challenge the 3,000 hard miles westward to the finish in Newport Rhode Island, USA offers.

The last winner, Dutch sailor Jan-Kees Lampe, racing his Open 40 ‘La Promesse’ set a new record in 2009 of 17 days and 17 hours for the forty foot class. Jan-Kees has committed to defend his title in May and will head a strong entry of boats from the Netherlands, where solo racing has always been well supported.

The Royal Western has made two important changes to this edition, both are particularly welcome. Firstly, they have re-opened the small boat class for boats from 27 to 30 feet. There has always been a strong tradition of small boats competing in the ‘big races’ and many of the best sailors have cut their ocean teeth in this class; Mike Golding, Marc Guillemot (Safran) and Pete Goss to name a few have all raced the OSTAR in boats under thirty feet. The move will again provide a great opportunity for young sailors to gain valuable experience in the Atlantic.

The second is the inclusion again for boats up to 60 feet. This is the first time they have raced since 2000 when, a very young Ellen MacArthur leapt to our attention, finishing in 14 days and 23 hours. Race Director for the second time David Southwood will lead an experienced race team for this edition. David, said: "The addition of the small boats and the sixties is going to open up some very exciting racing for this year’s race. I am also very pleased that several other veteran OSTAR skippers from earlier races plan to join Jan-Kees on the start line, in addition to others so far from, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland, USA and of course the UK. It’s once again a truly international event and were all hoping for another great race."

From the start in Plymouth, with it’s surrounding natural amphitheatre for those who can’t be close up on the water, The Eddystone Lighthouse is the turning point before the competitors head west into the continuous depressions the Atlantic will doubtless throw at them.

To the finish, where the Kennedy’s Nantucket Island is a landmark for sailors approaching shelter after dodging icebergs and fog on the Grand Banks off Newfoundland, the Newport Yacht Club always offers a warm welcome. This is unquestionably one of the world’s great offshore races.

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For more information please contact RWCY:

eMail: admin@rwy.org

Tel: 01752 660077

or visit the OSTAR website: www.rwy.org/racing/oceanic-racing/ostar/