



## **RYA Press Release**

16 February 2012

### **RYA and UK Etechells Class Association form partnership to support development of young sailors**



**Etechells racing Credit: RYA**

In an exciting development, young sailors who aspire to race one design keelboats at the highest level are being given a unique chance to apply for a number of fully race prepared Etechells, 30 foot keelboats, completely free of charge for the 2012 racing season, thanks to an initiative and partnership between the UK Etechells Class and RYA Racing. The objective is to bring two young teams up to the highest level possible with the aim of helping them to maximise their chances of winning the 2012 British Etechells Nationals.

The Etechells is a strict 30 foot one design keelboat which, outside of the Olympics, has some of the most competitive racing in the world and winning the Etechells World Championships is regarded as one of the hardest titles to win in sailing. Past World Champions include Americas Cup winners Dennis Conner and John Bertrand, Stuart Childerley (British Olympian) has won the title twice and Britain's triple Olympic medallist Ben Ainslie has competed at the event as crew.

To support the sailors' progression and development Race Training and Coaching will be provided by the UK Class Association with David Bedford and other top sailors supporting the teams with coaching and tips both on board the boats and from RIBs. Training and coaching weekends with video debriefs are scheduled to assist selected teams to learn the ropes as quickly and effectively as possible.

Thanks to the generosity and support of volunteers within the UK Etechells Class Association up to two selected teams will benefit from the use of their own boat for the season with a full programme of well organised and competitive racing, with entry fees, boat-yard costs and a small maintenance budget all covered by the Class. Some assistance towards accommodation will also be provided.

This opportunity is designed to give talented young sailors the experience of top level one design keelboat racing, giving them the resources and training to push their sailing to the highest level. The opportunity is available for 18-24 year olds, and is particularly aimed at British Keelboat Academy members and graduates of the RYA Volvo Youth Programme, although applications from other sailors are welcomed. All racing will be in the Solent based from Cowes and subsidised accommodation will be provided either at UKSA or at owners' homes on the island.

Applications will be accepted from individuals and teams of three or four sailors (the class maximum weight limit is 285 Kg so competitive teams will need to be as close as possible to that). For 2012 two teams will be offered the use of fully funded race prepared boats in the Solent for the whole of the 2012 season leading up to the British Nationals in September. Full dates for the Cowes Etechells fleet can be found on the UK Etechells fleet website: [www.etchellsukfleet.co.uk](http://www.etchellsukfleet.co.uk)

John Derbyshire OBE, RYA Racing Manager and Performance Director, commented: "We are delighted to be working with the volunteers and owners within the Etechells Class Association to offer this fantastic opportunity, aimed principally at graduates of our RYA Youth and Junior Racing and British Keelboat Academy programmes. At the RYA we're renown for being passionate about medals, but we are equally passionate that sailors from our programmes should go on to enjoy a lifetime within the sport, it's great to have the support of such an exciting and competitive class to help us achieve that aim."

Laurence Mead, Chair of UK Etechells Association, added: "We are really delighted to be able to make two boats available for young crews to come and join us racing what is a great one design keelboat class and hope we can help set them on their way to world class racing in the future. We plan to run the same program in 2013, when the worlds will be close by in Italy! They won't find it easy though and nobody will give them an inch once the racing starts!"

To apply please send a sailing CV and a brief covering email outlining why you should be given this opportunity. This should be sent to Luke McCarthy, British Keelboat Academy Head Coach ([luke@britishkeelboatacademy.org](mailto:luke@britishkeelboatacademy.org)) to be considered by a panel from the RYA and Etechells class.

Closing date for applications is Friday 9<sup>th</sup> March, and we intend to notify successful applicants by Friday 16<sup>th</sup> March whether they have been chosen to attend a selection and training weekend in Cowes on **14-15<sup>th</sup> April 2012**. Final allocation of places for this scheme will be made following this event by the selection panel.

For further information please visit [www.rya.org.uk](http://www.rya.org.uk).

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