



British students head for San Francisco to campaign for Youth America's Cup

The **Red Bull Youth America's Cup** is a new event under the umbrella of the America's Cup and is intended to afford young, talented sailors a clear pathway towards competing for one of the most prestigious trophies in sport – the America's Cup. It is scheduled for 1 – 4 September, 2013, in San Francisco, during the break between the start of the 2013 America's Cup Finals and the conclusion of the Louis Vuitton Cup. While six teams that have entered with the backing of an official America's Cup World Series team go direct to the Finals, other teams can qualify through two selection series being held this month.



www.americascup.com

On their own initiative and without any official GB sailing backing, a group of, mostly, current British Keelboat Academy sailors applied. They are the **GBR Youth Challenge**.

The team was put together by skipper **James French** (20, Newbridge, Isle of Wight), a member of the British Keelboat Academy, an experienced keelboat helm, Youth Match Racing Champion and former GB skier, who flew out to San Francisco last week. The rest of the team, who have variously competed in events at the highest level, including RC44 World championships, TP52 Medcup, Melges 32 circuit and F18 World championships, arrived today to compete in the second

of two selection events. The team includes students from the Universities of Kent, Southampton and Plymouth.



Trystan Seal, Peter Austin, Andy Sinclair, Seb Samways and Will Semken follow the advance guard, James French & Adam Lees to San Francisco

Red Bull Youth America's Cup explain that the event is being sailed in "a high-tech, grand prix race boat, the **AC45** (which) is powered by a wing that towers 70 feet above the deck, with excellent performance in winds from 5 to 30 knots. The AC45 is very physical to sail; the crew of six will have to be in top form to get the most from the boat. (It) is the "quarterhorse" design created specifically for use in the America's Cup World Series and the Red Bull Youth America's Cup.

AC45 Principal Dimensions

Length 13.45 m (44 feet)
Maximum Beam 6.9 m (22.6 feet)
Mast Height 21.5 m (70.5 feet)
Maximum Draft 2.7 m (8.8 feet)
Displacement 1,400 kg (3,086 lbs.)
Wing sail area 83.5 sqm (900 sq ft)
Jib area 48 sqm (516 sq ft)
Gennaker Area 125 sqm (1,345 sq ft)



“The catamaran was designed to introduce America’s Cup crews to the intricacies of wing sail racing. Wing sails are not uncommon technology, but they are “new equipment” in the realm of the America’s Cup.

“In the AC World Series the boats are sailed by a crew of five, and it’s not uncommon to see the sailors doubled over on the trampoline in between races, their chests heaving as they try to catch their breath.

“If you’re not in peak physical shape you’ll have trouble getting around the racecourse. In the Red Bull Youth America’s Cup, the boats will be sailed by a crew of six, the extra crew owing to the physical nature of the boat. Forward sails include a jib, for use when sailing upwind, and a gennaker, for high-speed sailing off the wind”.



www.americascup.com

Just before our guys caught their flight, we caught up with **Peter Austin** (20, Sai Kung, Hong Kong), an economics student at Southampton. He saw the event publicity last year and thought about it, but decided he must be ruled out as the average weight requirement was 75kg (apparently he weighs in a tad higher). But former BKA sailor, James French took the initiative and recruited the team to join him in the enterprise.

Peter explained that they were busy with the entry last autumn, but confirmation that they had an invitation to participate in one of the two selection events only came through in January – and then they only had about a week to confirm acceptance and pay the £5,000 entry! They have not stopped since – training, obtaining support and sponsorship, fixing the logistics....everything that goes to make an international campaign, and at very short notice.

They are supporting **Macmillan Cancer Support** - www.macmillan.org.uk - the charity of a sponsor who made their entry possible, and they have support from **Team Concise** - www.teamconcise.com - and **SLAM** - www.slamuk.com. They are particularly grateful to **Jim Mundy** who solved a critical challenge. How were they to gain multi-hull experience quickly?

James had recruited a catamaran expert, **Andy Sinclair** (20, from Southampton), 3D Design student at Plymouth University, the reigning RYA Youth National Champion in the Spitfire and

silver medallist in the SL16 (ISAF Youth Multihull) Europeans. But they needed to get on the water! Jim made available his Tek-Kat F23, and UKSA supplied a RIB, to enable them to train in the Solent.



Jim Mundy's Tek-Kat F23 - www.gbryouthac.com

The training was focused on getting every member of the team acquainted with high performance catamarans, with several of the team coming from a monohull background. **Andy Sinclair** said, "everyone is taking to their new roles in cat sailing really well; it is looking promising". GBR Youth Challenge skipper, James French, announced, "the Tek-Kat has been a good multihull platform to train on; we aim to use the skills we've developed to make a smooth transition onto the AC45s".



Tek-Kat F23 - www.gbryouthac.com

Well, the team have a big challenge ahead. The first group of teams - from Australia, Austria, Denmark, Germany, New Zealand and South Africa – have already competed last week. They started off with a training day, and, amongst their briefings, they met up with Russell Coutts, Jimmy Spithill, Ben Ainslie, Iain Percy and Nathan Outteridge. Then they went for competition and the Kiwis' *Full Metal Jacket* led from Germany's *STG/NRV Youth Team*.

Now, *GBR Youth Challenge* will compete against teams from Argentina, Italy, New Zealand, Portugal and Switzerland this week. Impressive that they have got themselves into the event.....and now they are in San Francisco! We wish our guys all the best for a great week.



You can see what is going on via the America's Cup website: www.americascup.com and Facebook: www.facebook.com/RBYAC. Our guys can be found at www.gbryouthac.com, Facebook: www.facebook.com/GBRYouthChallenge and Twitter: @GBRYouth.



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