



ANNAPOLIS YACHT CLUB

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Double the Entries for AYC Double-Handed Distance Race

Annapolis, MD (September 23, 2020) — AYC organizers were thrilled the inaugural Double Handed Race attracted 17 entries in two classes. Rave reviews have more than doubled the turnout, with 38 boats in three classes set to compete in the second edition.

Last year, Arthur Libby and Fredrik Salvesen donated their J/105 sloops to out-of-town sailors competing in the inaugural Annapolis Yacht Club Double Handed Distance Race.

When it was over, the two AYC members heard from the teams they supported how fun and exciting the regatta was.

Libby and Salvesen were motivated to take on the challenge themselves, and therefore will be sailing their own boats in the second AYC Double Handed Distance Race, being held the weekend of October 3-4 on the Chesapeake Bay. Principal Race Officer Dick Neville will start the fleet at noon on Saturday with plans calling for a course that would have boats finishing approximately 24 hours later.

“I have always enjoyed long overnight events, so the idea of doing something that lasts 24 hours excites my distance racing juices,” said Libby, who will have his son A.J. aboard as crew. “I’m excited and nervous at the same time.”

Father and son have raced the family boat *Doghouse* many times together, albeit always with other crew aboard. The elder Libby got a taste of sailing a J/105 doublehanded when he and Tom Carter teamed to enter AYC’s inaugural Two Bridge Fiasco last month.

“It was a blast and got me thinking about doing the Double Handed Race,” Libby said. “Doing this race with my son is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity so we jumped on it. Hopefully, the two of us can be competitive over 24 hours.”

A.J. Libby sailed collegiately at SUNY-Maritime and currently crews aboard a North Star freighter that routinely transits between Tacoma, Washington and Anchorage, Alaska. The younger Libby, who is close to obtaining his Second Mate license, has never done an overnight sailboat race.

“A.J. is a navigational officer by trade and responsible for a 900-foot container ship that is underway at night all the time,” said Arthur Libby, noting that he and his son have both attended the Safety-at-Sea Seminar held annually in Annapolis. “I think the important factor with racing doublehanded is that every decision has to be carefully planned out.”

While the father-son tandem is entered in the ORC 2 handicap class, Salvesen and Molly Wilmer are competing in the J/105 one-design class. Regatta rules require J/105 teams to consist of a male and female crew.

Salvesen and *Mirage* co-owner Cedric Lewis normally race with a crew of six or seven with Wilmer among many longtime members of the program. The J/105 is equipped with a roller-furling genoa, which helps when sailing shorthanded.

Salvesen and Wilmer got a taste of racing with just two aboard during the Two Bridge Fiasco. Salvesen was forced to go forward to set and douse the spinnaker and admittedly had some serious issues.

“It’s a big spinnaker and is very difficult to get up and down,” said Salvesen, noting some teams are utilizing a sock setup to make the takedown process easier. “Molly and I learned a lot during the Two Bridge Fiasco, and we’ll apply those lessons.”

A big difference between the two Annapolis Yacht Club organized races is the distance. Legs will be 10 nautical miles or more, giving teams plenty of time to think about and implement maneuvers.

“I think the biggest challenge is for both sailors to stay awake for 24 hours. That’s a long time.” Salvesen said.

Mirage was the winning boat in the J/105 class during the inaugural AYC Double Handed Distance Race with Randy Smyth and Christina Persson teaming up. Smyth, whose success as a multihull racer earned induction into the National Sailing Hall of Fame, will defend his title aboard *Bat IV* (owned by Andrew Kennedy).

While Libby and Salvesen have vast experience aboard a J/105, they will be competing against visiting teams that have logged a lot of hours racing doublehanded. Many of those are pointing toward the 2024 Olympics, which will feature a doublehanded class for the first time.

R.J. Cooper and Courtney Cumberland, a brother-sister combination, join Smyth as Olympic hopefuls competing in the J/105 class in the upcoming AYC DH Distance Race.

Jesse Fielding and Francesca Clapcich, co-skippers of the State Street Marathon Sailing Team, will race a Figaro 3 in ORC 1 as they continue their campaign to earn the lone United States berth in the Mixed Two-Person Offshore event at the summer games in Paris.

Few entries have as much doublehanded racing experience as the husband-wife team of Justin and Christina Wolfe, who will be competing in the J/105 class. The Wolfes have been sailing together for 25 years and logged more than 10,000 nautical miles offshore.

The couple, who recently celebrated their 24th anniversary, reside on Orcas Island located between Seattle, Washington and Victoria, British Columbia. They raced a J/120 for many years before recently switching to a J/111.

Justin and Christina have enjoyed considerable success as a tandem, posting three straight podium finishes in the renowned Race to the Straits – an annual doublehanded trek from Seattle to Port Townsend and back.

“We work very well together, which is certainly our strong suit,” Christina said. “We’re both very technical and meticulous planners. We feel quite confident we’ll put our best foot forward in this event.”

The Wolfes will be sailing *Firebrand*, a J/105 owned by AYC member Jon Slabaugh. They plan to arrive in Annapolis the Tuesday before the AYC Double Handed Race to practice.

“The J/105 has a number of unique attributes, so we want to familiarize ourselves with the boat,” Christina said.

Neville will start the fleet off Hackett’s Point and utilize one of four different courses depending upon weather forecast and wind conditions. Course options range from 95 to 100 nautical miles with the selection being announced the morning of the race.

Sailing Club of the Chesapeake member Richard Born will compete in ORC 1 aboard *Windborn*, a J/120 owned by his father. He is partnering with longtime friend Guillaume Seynhaeve, who grew up racing aboard his father’s series of big boats.

Born and Seynhaeve, who sailed at Tulane and Boston College, respectively, coached together at J/World Annapolis during summer breaks.

“Our team came together because you have to be able to trust who you are sailing with and need two people that can do all the tasks required on the boat – from steering to navigating to making coffee,” Born said.

They also used the Two Bridge Fiasco as a shakedown to make sure they could successfully sail the J/120.

“Converting *Windborn* for doublehanded racing was not a big task because we already had a lot of the gear and only had to change some of the rigging,” Born said. “Our major obstacles were figuring out how to do sail changes and maneuvers with only two people.”

Born, 38, is looking forward to seeing how he and Seynhaeve stack up against some of the country’s top doublehanded teams. He’s excited because October typically delivers Chamber of Commerce conditions on the Chesapeake Bay.

“Hopefully, the out-of-town teams will see why Annapolis is such a great spot for serious sailboat racing,” he said.

Linda Ambrose
AYC Harborside Director
Email: lambrose@annapolisyc.org