

# Newport *this week*

## ‘Updated’ Volvo Ocean Race Streams Ahead

*By ohtadmin on June 22, 2017*

– By Lisa McCurdy with additional staff reporting



The Volvo Ocean Race is expected to attract crowds when it returns to Newport.

Once again, Newport has been chosen as the sole North American host city of the Volvo Ocean Race. It will host the race May 8-20. The Newport stopover is a portion of a larger race that fits into the bigger picture of what is often called “the Everest of Sailing.” In 2015, the stopover attracted more than 131,000 to the Fort Adams race village.

As the race heads into the 2017- 18 edition, fans and locals eagerly await its return to Newport. This time around, they can also expect updates to lengths of cycles, boat design, routes, and even crew gender rules, in keeping with the times.

For the 2017-18 edition, the race has introduced rules that give teams a major incentive to include women. Turner announced the changes to crew rules last fall. “Sailing is one of the few sports where you actually can have mixed teams, and we want to take advantage of that, and also reflect the growing desire for greater diversity in business, in particular the kind who back the race teams today,” he said.

In an effort to become more gender-inclusive, the number of sailors allowed in an all-male crew was reduced from eight to seven, but a team may take up to two additional female sailors for a total of nine. Alternatively, skippers can take 10 sailors if the team consists of an even male/female split, and an all-female team may take 11 crew members.

Dongfeng Race Team was the first team to make changes, bringing on Marie Riou, an accomplished Olympic sailor from France, and Carolijn Brouwer, who has competed in two Volvo Ocean Races, most recently on the all-female Team SCA in 2014-15. At press time, the only other female on a public team roster is Annemieke Bes on Team AkzoNobel. But many teams have not announced their full roster.

The Volvo Ocean Race will also switch from a three- to two-year cycle after the 2017-18 edition, a change that will provide more continuity and more commercial value for professional sailing teams, sponsors and host cities. The change will mean at least some race activity in every calendar year.

“The shorter cycle means we could shorten each edition by a few months from the current eight to nine-month format, but nonetheless go to more markets in total over each period of four years and two races,” race CEO Mark Turner said.

The race also announced that the 14th edition in 2019-20 will be contested in brand new foil-assisted monohull boats. The addition of “flying”

The 2018 edition will start on Oct. 22 in Alicante, Spain. The route has been adjusted, creating the longest race course ever at 46,000 nautical miles. The race will be sailed on the same Volvo 65 one design boats as previously. In 2018, the Newport stopover village will be open from May 8 to May 20.

While sailing is always unpredictable and depends on wind and sea state variables, the Volvo Ocean Race fleet should arrive during the first day or two of the village opening.

Ahead of Newport, the fleet will depart from Itajai, Brazil on April 22 and sail 5,700 nautical miles north, crossing the equator from south to north and contending with the St. Helena High, a sometimes-unpredictable subtropical high-pressure zone that can make for some wild weather.

When in Newport, teams will participate in a number of events and activities, the details of which will be released in the coming months.

On May 19, teams will compete in an in-port race sailed directly in front of Fort Adams. The in-port races are scored separately from the ocean legs, but in the event of a tie in the ocean scores, the in-port points will come into play.

When the fleet departs from Rhode Island on May 20, it will head east to Cardiff, Wales, which is only 14 miles from Newport, Wales. The course is a traditional transatlantic leg, and likely the one that many sailors in the race will be most familiar with due to its popularity as a route for offshore training.

Team Vestas 11th Hour Racing, skippered by Rhode Island's Charlie Enright and directed by Mark Towill, both veteran racers who sailed on Team Alvamedica in the last race addition, are the most recent team to complete two transatlantic training sails, one in each direction. These training sails are an important opportunity for teams to test their boats and equipment and decide on crew choices ahead of the race.

In addition to Team Vestas, four additional teams have announced their participation in the race. Team AkzoNobel were the first to officially announce their plans to compete, followed by China's Dongfeng Race Team, Team Mapfre and Team Sun Hung Kai/Scallywag.

*Newport This Week* will continue to provide updates and details as they are announced.

This site uses Akismet to reduce spam. [Learn how your comment data is processed.](#)