



PRESS RELEASE

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Boats in 4 Classes Start 2017 Annapolis to Newport Race Sunny Skies and Warm Temperatures Send Off First Wave of Competitors

Annapolis, MD (June 2, 2017) — It was an absolutely gorgeous day on the Chesapeake Bay, with sunny skies and warm temperatures providing a perfect backdrop for the first wave of starters in the 2017 Annapolis to Newport Race.

Unfortunately, the wind wasn't quite as cooperative at the outset and the 32 boats that started Friday morning found light conditions when they reached the rendezvous point near the main shipping channel.

Bruce Bingman, a Principal Race Officer for A2N, began the starting sequence in a northeasterly breeze of 4 to 6 knots. Four classes — IRC 2, PHRF 2, PHRF 3, and Performance Cruiser — started at 11 a.m. with the J/122 *Orion* coming off the line with the best speed and quickly surging to the front.

Annapolis Yacht Club member Paul Milo is the owner of *Orion*, which placed third in IRC 2 on corrected time in the 2015 Annapolis to Newport Race. In order to start all 32 boats at the same time, Bingman had the main committee boat *Promesa* serve as a mid-line mark. *Moonlight Express*, an Eastbay 38, and *Road Trip*, a North Pacific 42, set the east and west ends of the line.

"Everybody seemed to want the eastern end of the line, but I think the boats that got off the best were the ones to the west because there was slightly better breeze on that side," Bingman said.

Every boat in the fleet popped the spinnaker shortly after crossing the line and many were able to carry it big sail for several miles while reaching toward the Eastern Shore. However, some of the boats near the back of the pack experienced a slight wind change and had to drop the chute.

Both the light air and wind angle seemed to favor the J/122 and the pack of J/120 sloops, all of which were going well under asymmetrical spinnakers. A few hours after the start, the wind filled in from the north-northwest with the weather buoy located off Sharps Island Light recording 10 knots with gusts to 15 knots. Race Tracker showed *Windborn*, the J/120 skippered by Richard Born, clipping along nicely at 10 knots off Taylor's Island around 4 p.m.

Windborn is one of five J/120s competing in PHRF 2, and organizers with host Annapolis Yacht Club gave that particular one-design a sub-class. Four of them regularly compete against each other on the Chesapeake Bay and have already developed a friendly rivalry.

“The J/120 sub-class is a great addition and adds an extra level of competition within an already competitive event,” said Jimmy Praley, skipper of *Shinnecock*. “All the 120s entered are very well sailed and equally capable of winning both the sub-class and PHRF overall.

“While we will be most focused on our positioning with respect to all of the competitors in our class, the 120s tend to find their way to the top of the fleet, so it will be particularly important to keep an eye on them,” Praley added.

Annapolis to Newport Race is a 475-nautical-mile passage that combines inshore (Chesapeake Bay) and offshore (Atlantic Ocean) elements. This year’s race figures to last three to five days for most of Friday’s starters with crews breaking up into two watches by the first night underway.

The voyage will be much more comfortable aboard the six entries in Performance Cruiser, a class that made its A2N debut in 2015. Skipper Steve Eller and his crew aboard the *Oceanis 45* sat on cushions in a cockpit covered by a large bimini during Friday’s start. *Odette*, a Hylas 56 owned by Jasen Adams, also looked like the type of boat to be aboard for multiple days at sea.

Bingman announced to Friday’s fleet that a late amendment was added to the Sailing Instructions. It was an important notice as the finish line in Newport has been moved one nautical mile up the Narragansett River.

Annapolis to Newport has traditionally finished off Castle Hill Lighthouse at the mouth of the Narragansett Bay. However, the U.S. Coast Guard informed Annapolis Yacht Club officials that Castle Hill Lighthouse and its surrounding grounds are currently off-limits to civilians.

Bingman said the Race Committee on the Newport end will now finish boats off Fort Adams at the entrance to Newport Harbor.

The second and final wave of A2N entries begins tomorrow on the Chesapeake Bay. Follow along on [YB Tracker](#) and find complete information on the 2017 A2N Race on the [event website](#).

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