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### Friends Become Rivals at 2017 Annapolis to Newport Race

Richard Born & Jimmy Praley Utilize Lifelong Offshore Experiences and Fathers' Wisdom

*Annapolis, MD (April 7, 2017)* — [Annapolis Yacht Club](#) members Richard Born and Jimmy Praley grew up sailing on big boats with their fathers. Both began by racing on the Chesapeake Bay during elementary school and then graduated to offshore racing as teenagers. After a lot of dinghy racing in high school and college, Born and Praley eagerly returned to big boat racing and became indispensable crew members for their fathers.

Now, things have come full circle as Born and Praley will each skipper entries in the [2017 Annapolis to Newport Race](#) starting June 2-3. The two longtime friends will become competitors in the same class as both will be leading J/120 racing programs.

“My father wants to take a backseat on this one,” Praley said. “He’s not sure how many offshore races he has left and wants me to gain a better understanding about all the logistics in terms of organizing the crew and prepping the boat.”

This will be the sixth Annapolis to Newport Race for Praley, who debuted in 2007 as crew aboard the Santa Cruz 70 *Donnybrook*. He has served as a watch captain for his father aboard the J/120 *Shinnecock* for the past four editions of the 475-nautical-mile passage.

“Annapolis to Newport has always been one of my favorite races,” Praley said. “It’s a very challenging, very tactical course. It’s like three races rolled into one because you have the Chesapeake Bay portion, the Atlantic Ocean portion and the Block Island-to-Newport portion.”

Born will never forget his first Annapolis to Newport Race, which came in 1997 aboard the family’s J/35 *Grayling*. He was 15 years old and was thrilled by his first experience going into the Atlantic.

“Obviously, I really liked it because I’ve been doing offshore racing ever since,” said Born, who completed his first Newport to Bermuda Race in 1998. “Ocean racing isn’t something you can read a book (about). You have to go out there and gain experience.”

Born’s father and namesake bought a J/120 in 2003 and ever since they have been entering A2N in odd years and Newport to Bermuda in even years.

"The old man is backing off a bit," said Born, who was skipper of *Windborn* in the 2015 A2N race. "He doesn't want to be responsible for prepping the boat for going offshore anymore."

Born and Praley fully understand the importance of proper preparation in advance of an offshore passage. Each is diligently working through the checklist in terms of safety gear and electronics equipment.

"We're all set in terms of safety features," Praley said. "We go above and beyond what is actually required. We make sure the majority of the crew has attended the Safety-at-Sea seminar and we have a personal AIS transponder for everyone."

Praley has already met with his sailmaker to select *Shinnecock's* inventory for A2N and has been researching housing in Newport for the crew. His father taught the importance of choosing the crew.

"I think the most important element is making sure you have a group of sailors aboard that get along," Jimmy Praley said. "You have seven or eight people crammed into tight quarters for three or four days so it's critical to have good chemistry and a cohesive group."

Praley, a Key School graduate and four-year varsity letterman with the Tufts University sailing team, admits to feeling the weight of responsibility that comes with holding the title of skipper.

"Ultimately, you're responsible for safety and well-being of the entire crew so it's definitely an eye-opener," he said. "I'm fortunate that my father has been a great teacher over the years. Up until this point, he has been the final decision-maker. Now that job falls to me. Like my father, I'll always seek out and value the input of others."

Born, 35, and Praley, 32, are shining examples of the evolution that serves as lifeblood for a respected institution such as Annapolis Yacht Club, graduating from junior members to active adult members. They each have represented AYC in team racing events all over the U.S. and United Kingdom.

Born and Praley were fortunate their fathers encouraged them to pursue ocean racing. Organizers of A2N established the Youth Challenge Trophy to encourage the next generation of offshore competitors. Skippers interested in vying for the trophy must race with a crew that includes a minimum of three sailors under 25 years old at the race's start. Service academy entries are not eligible for this challenge.

*Testing Life*, a Tartan 46 skippered by Brian Mulhall of Ocean City, N.J., was presented the inaugural Youth Challenge Trophy following the 2015 Annapolis to Newport Race.

"That was our most important trophy," said Mulhall, who had his 19-year-old son Cameron and a pair of St. Mary's College students aboard. "We run a program with Ten Commandments, and right at the top is that we are always looking to introduce young people to the sport of sailboat racing."

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