



1965 – 50th ANNIVERSARY -- 2015

200 ENTRIES EYED FOR STORM TRYSAIL CLUB'S 50th ANNIVERSARY BLOCK ISLAND RACE WEEK

Modern and classic yachts alike to challenge winds and tidal currents of Block Island Sound

NEW SHOREHAM, R.I. (Feb. 24, 2015) – More than 110 competitors have taken advantage of the early entry period for the Storm Trysail Club's 50th anniversary Block Island Race Week, and regatta chairman Peter Rugg sees an event befitting celebratory status shaping up for the idyllic "getaway" island, June 21-26.

"We're very pleased with the pace of entries, which is running ahead of 2013 when we had 180 boats," said Rugg, who's also the vice commodore of the Storm Trysail Club. "The legacy of Block Island Race Week is one of great competition on the water and even greater camaraderie shoreside, and we're hoping that will lure enough participants to push us over 200 entries."

The early entry period closes Saturday night at 11:59 pm EST (all registrations and entry fees received by that time are eligible for the early entry fee) and many of the entrants hail from the northeast. But early entries have also been received from California, Florida and Texas, and internationally from Bermuda, Canada and Great Britain.

"As this is the 50th anniversary race week, we're trying to make this event one of the more memorable in recent years," Rugg said. "We have three one-design classes holding championships during race week, a doublehanded and cruising division are both planned, and there'll be a wide array of shoreside activities to keep Block Island Race Week true to its roots."

The Block Island Race Week 50th anniversary fleet features the 2013 overall champion Damian Emery (Shoreham, N.Y.) and his J/105 *Eclipse*. Emery and crew won the Everett B. Morris Memorial Trophy for best overall performance by winning their 13-boat division with the low score of 10 points, including five first-place finishes in the seven-race series. A scoring algorithm that takes into account number of boats in the class and the number of first-place finishes found *Eclipse* the champion of the varied regatta.

"We were in synch that week, and it always pays to have luck on your side. We've had the boat for a number of years now and usually have the same crew, so all of that helps," said Emery, who also won the J/105 class at the 2011 Block Island Race Week.

"Block Island isn't that far away from our home on Long Island, but it feels like a different place. As a crew we enjoy spending time with each other, so the time off the water is very enjoyable. The regatta is well run and we're looking forward to another enjoyable week," Emery said.

Another early entry of note is the classic 65-foot sloop *The Blue Peter*, owned by Mathew Barker (Sheffield, U.K.). Built of teak and launched in 1930, she was lengthened to 65 feet (an increase of 10 feet) in 1938 and had a 20-year string of winning regattas around the south coast of England and later the Mediterranean Sea for several Italian owners. Barker purchased the yacht in 1999 and she continues to win races no matter the locale.



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“Owning and captaining *The Blue Peter* is fulfilling a lifelong dream for me,” said the 48-year-old Barker. “I plan to sail her into New York City and then up to New England to take part in as many East Coast regattas as possible. Hopefully we can encourage a few other classics to join us at Block Island.”

Founded in 1965, The Storm Trysail Club’s Block Island Race Week is held in odd-numbered years on idyllic Block Island, about 13 miles off the southern coast of Rhode Island. Measuring less than 10 square miles in area, Block Island has been named one of “The Last Great Places” by the Nature Conservancy.

With boats ranging in size from 6.5 meters to 65 feet racing is planned on three circles for one-design and rated classes, which could sail up to two races per day. The IRC, HPR and PHRF rating rules will be featured, as well as a Cruising Division that will send crews on a “navigator’s” course around fixed aids of navigation.

Three one-design classes will hold regional or continental championships, and the winner of each class in 2013 has already entered:

- J/105 Class – East Coast Championship (*Eclipse*)
- J/109 Class – North American Championship (*Storm*, Rick Lyall, Wilton, Conn.)
- Swan 42 Class – New England Championship (*Apparition*, Ken Colburn, Dover, Mass.)

A highlight of the week is the race around Block Island, a 20-nautical-mile sprint that challenges crews with swift tidal currents, rocky outcrops and windless holes while racing against picture-perfect sand dunes and lush flora and fauna of the island.

About the Storm Trysail Club

The Storm Trysail Club is one of the world’s most respected sailing clubs. Established in 1938, its membership includes skilled blue water and ocean racing sailors, nearly all of whom have flown a storm trysail (a small triangular sail flown in very strong winds) during an ocean race. The club is headquartered in Larchmont, N.Y., and has regional stations throughout the U.S. The club hosts Block Island Race Week in odd-numbered years, the annual Block Island Race and Fort Lauderdale to Key West Race and the biennial Miami to Montego Bay Race. The Club’s affiliated 501(c)(3) organization, The Storm Trysail Foundation, holds annual junior safety-at-sea seminars and the Intercollegiate Offshore Regatta for college sailors using big boats. For more information, visit <http://www.stormtrysail.org/>