

IDA LEWIS DISTANCE RACE NEWS



Ida Lewis Distance Race *Sixty-Three Teams Ready for the Challenge*

NEWPORT, R.I. (August 18, 2021) – Sixty-three teams have registered for the [Ida Lewis Distance Race](#) presented by [Bluenose Yacht Sales](#), which starts its 17th edition on Friday, August 20 at 11:00 am with the OFFSHORE portion of the event. In a picturesque sendoff near Fort Adams in Newport, R.I., the bulk of the fleet (50 teams) will head out past Castle Hill on a round-trip overnight adventure that could take them as far as Montauk (depending on the weather forecast), while the balance of teams will hold off until Saturday at 10:00 am to start an IN BAY race that, while not as long as the OFFSHORE race, still covers a decent distance of 33 nautical miles (or less if the wind conditions are light) on a course that tracks north of the Pell Bridge and around Conanicut and Prudence Islands.

“The Race Committee determines which of four courses to use for the OFFSHORE race when it is clear what the conditions will be,” said Race Chair Pat Kennedy. “The shortest course is 112 nautical miles while the longest course is 169.” He added that this is the second time for the IN BAY race, which was an option added last year during Covid-19 restrictions. “While there was only one course last year for that race, we have added an additional course this year in case the weather dictates the need for a shorter race.”

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From Castle Hill and other vantage points in Newport and Jamestown, spectators can catch 50 teams as they head out the Bay on the Ida Lewis Distance Race, which is presented by Bluenose Yacht Sales and starts this Friday at 11:00 am / Photo credit Stephen Cloutier. **Ctrl+Click to download**

The idea is that both INSHORE and IN BAY fleets will have finished their races by Saturday afternoon before a 7:30 p.m. prizegiving that evening at host Ida Lewis Yacht Club. Both OFFSHORE and IN BAY finish lines are set between the Yacht Club, which sits on a rock in outer Newport Harbor, and a mark that can be sighted from its deck. In a tradition that has endeared itself to OFFSHORE competitors over the years, an Ida Lewis rib, with a welcome team aboard, delivers a bottle of Prosecco to each team as it crosses the finish line, whether in daylight or the wee hours of Saturday morning, which is often the time of arrival for the speediest boats in the race.

The largest boat competing this year is the Swan 82 *White Rhino* (OFFSHORE ORC Class), skippered by Todd Stuart (Key West, Fla.). The smallest is the 21-foot Mini Transat Prototype *Warrior 21* (OFFSHORE PHRF Doublehanded), skippered by Griffin Spinney (Newport, R.I.).

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From upper Left: *Running Tide* skipper Beau Van Metre, *Running Tide* under sail (photo credits Billy Black), the *Mudratz Racing* team (Youth Challenge) at the Ida Lewis Distance Race in 2018 (photo credit Michele Almeida). **Ctrl+Click to download**

A sure standout on the roster is the 60-foot *Running Tide*, owned by Beau Van Metre (Middleburg, Va.) and sailing in PHRF Coronet Class. In the 1970s, no yacht had as many Grand Prix podium finishes as this Sparkman & Stephens design; under the ownership of Beau Van Metre and his late father Al Van Metre, *Running Tide* amassed over 200 trophies over a 12+ year span.

“Starting in the late 1980s, *Running Tide* belonged to two other owners before my wife Dea and I bought it back in 2018 to continue its great ocean racing legacy,” said Beau Van Metre. He explained that the boat has been completely rebuilt – it had been run hard aground in a storm by the second owner – with an eye toward distance racing. It will compete in next summer’s biennial Newport to Bermuda Race, which *Running Tide* won in 1976. (She also has won the Annapolis to Newport Race four times.) “We are looking forward to competing

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in the Ida Lewis Distance Race, if for no other reason than to get some more time in on the boat and be together with the crew,” said Van Metre, who will have aboard more than a handful of local sailors who were in one way or another a part of *Running Tide’s* history.

Also sailing the event for the first time will be the J/122 *Alliance* (PHRF Coronet Class), although the boat’s new co-owners Eric Irwin and Mary Martin (both Newport, R.I.) have both competed here several times in the past, mostly aboard the J/109 *Vento Solare* (a frontrunner in PHRF Aloha Class).

Said Irwin: "We are excited to compete in our first overnight distance race with our "new" boat and prospective crew for the Newport to Bermuda Race 2022!"

Qualifying for the Collegiate Challenge are four entries, including the aforementioned *Warrior 21*. The remaining three teams will be seen fighting it out in the PHRF Aloha Class; they are Collin Alexander’s (Rye, N.Y.) Sunfast 3300 *Byte* and two separate Beneteau Figaro 2s from the Collegiate Offshore Sailing Circuit: *Aquarius* and *Hot Socks*. The latter teams also qualify for the Youth Challenge and will match up on that front with *Mudratz Racing’s* (Stonington, Conn.) J/105 *MadBlue*, also sailing in PHRF Aloha.

“These young sailors are right at that age where their interest is pulled in so many directions,” said Richard Feeney (Bristol, R.I.) who has helped organize the two Beneteau teams and will sail as the designated adult Captain on *Hot Sox*. He explained that eight students, split between the two boats, have been through a six-week training program; their average age is 16 ½.

“We were able to use the J/22s at Bristol Yacht Club as a stepping stone to get them from the 14-foot boats they used in high school sailing to these Beneteaus, which are 33 feet. They have the sailing part down; it’s the racing now that will be the big challenge!”

Sponsors

Ida Lewis Yacht Club hosts this world-class race with the help of generous sponsors. Our Presenting Partner for 2021 is [Bluenose Yacht Sales](#). Gold Sponsors are [Contender Sailcloth](#) and City of Newport ; Silver Sponsor is [Safe Harbor Newport Shipyard](#); Bronze Sponsors are [Gold’s Wine & Spirits](#), [Kirby Marine](#), [Newport Construction Services](#), and [North Sails](#); Contributing Sponsors are [Goslings Rum](#), [Mac Designs](#), [RIG PRO](#) and [Stella Artois](#), [Toni Mills Graphic Design](#), and [Triton Insurance](#).

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