



News Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 28, 2012

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Exciting Changes Announced for 2013 Marion Bermuda Race

Marion, Massachusetts – The Marion Bermuda Race organization has recently adopted significant changes designed to make this biennial offshore yacht race more accessible than ever before. These new initiatives invite broader participation and position the Marion Bermuda Race to remain the prestigious offshore yacht race event that it has been since 1977. Highlights include:

- Vessel Size Limits increased from 80ft to 100ft LOA
- A New Division with unrestricted sail inventory
- Symmetrical Spinnakers and Spinnaker Poles permitted
- Traditional Sail Training/Classic Yacht Division added

In making this announcement Allan McLean, Executive Director Marion Bermuda Cruising Yacht Race Association said, “We recognize the sum of these changes is significant, however each change was considered individually and stands on its own merits. These changes reflect the Race organization’s ongoing commitment to evolve with the sport of offshore sailboat racing and recognition of a desire by some potential entrants to participate in a way that was previously prohibited. The changes broaden eligibility for participation, while maintaining the Corinthian spirit of the Race - focused on family and fun, with captains and crew participating for the joy and pleasure of sailing, competition and the camaraderie that accompanies this Race.”

Increased Vessel Size

The maximum length overall for boats that may enter the race has increased from 80’ to 100’. This acknowledges that there are privately owned vessels in the 80’-100’ range, designed and built for cruising, which can now find a natural home in a friendly but competitive racing environment .

Historically the Marion Bermuda Race was initially restricted to vessels 62' or less. In 2003 this limit was expanded to 80' and now caps at 100'. Says McLean, "Increasing vessel size throughout the years has been a natural progression which reflects changes in the industry and marketplace."

Founders Division

The fleet of boats that will race under the original Race regulations with limited sail inventory, boat length 32-80 ft, and all amateur crews will now be called the "Founders Division". No change has been made to the Celestial Navigation rules but boats in this division will benefit from now being able to fly a symmetrical spinnaker with a spinnaker pole. Entrants may elect to race without a spinnaker or choose to fly either an asymmetrical spinnaker or symmetrical spinnaker. They will be handicapped accordingly. As in the past, the final selection must be made at least one month prior to the start. McLean added, "Maintaining the limits on sail inventory and professional crew to provide a level playing field for amateur crews that form our traditional entries was a prime consideration."

New Division – Relaxed Sail Inventory

A new division has been added for cruising boats 65' to 100'. This new division expands the LOA up to 100 ft and lifts the restrictions on the sail inventory. McLean added "This new division will relax the size and sail plan restrictions while maintaining the Corinthian spirit of the race." Boats in this Division will be permitted to carry multiple spinnakers and use a spinnaker pole. Handicaps will be applied accordingly.

New Classic Sail Division

The Classic Sail division is open to training vessels of any size in the ASTA (American Sail Training Association) B, C or D training classes. These vessels will be handicapped according to the ASTA method. Classic Yachts which obtain an ASTA handicap may also join the Race. It is anticipated that boats within the Classic Sail division will have amateur crews with professional licensed officers. Entrants in this division are anticipated to be documented Coast Guard inspected vessels and as such will not be subject to normal inspection process. They will, however, be subject to the compliance committee's post-race inspections. Currently, the [Spirit of Bermuda](#) (112 ft LOA including bowsprit) is the first entrant in this division.

Handicapping

The ORR handicapping system will be used for both the Founders Division and the New Division (relaxed sail inventory). The Classic Sail division will use the ASTA handicapping system. The Marion Bermuda Race remains a Category 1 Race, restricted to invited yachts with fixed keels, immovable ballast, complete permanent galleys, enclosed heads and finished interiors with permanent bunks.

"Registration is open and we already have entrants under these new rules" says David Patton, Trustee Chairman. "There is a great buzz surrounding the race right now and although there is no way to know at this early stage how many boats will be on the start line next June, we are buoyed by the enthusiasm we feel from the sailors and our volunteers. We are looking forward to a great race and take pride in the team we have in place."

About the Marion Bermuda Cruising Yacht Race Association

Since its inception in 1977, the biennial Marion Bermuda Race has been a premier 645 mile ocean race and sailing event which appeals to a broad range of cruising and racing enthusiasts. The spirit of the race is one focused on Family and Fun, and all yachts and crew are participating for the joy and pleasure of sailing, competition, and the camaraderie that accompanies such an offshore event. The Marion Bermuda Race encourages the development of blue water sailing skills on seaworthy yachts that can be handled safely offshore with limited crew. The Marion Bermuda Race is a 501(c)(3) organization and among other educational efforts, supports and encourages [Youth Sailing](#) programs. The Marion to Bermuda Race is organized and run entirely by hundreds of volunteering members of The [Beverly Yacht Club](#) (BYC), [The Blue Water Sailing Club](#) (BWSC) and [The Royal Hamilton Amateur Dinghy Club](#) (RHADC) for the Marion Bermuda Cruising Yacht Race Association.

2011 Race PHOTOS: <http://www.spectrumphotofg.com/marionbermuda/index.html>

2011 Race Results may be found here: <http://www.marionbermuda.com/index.php?page=results>

Website: www.marionbermuda.com

Race Forum/Discussion: <http://racetobermuda.ning.com>

BLOG: <http://marionbermuda.wordpress.com>

