

Overall twenty-four regional/special prizes will be awarded and the top four boats in each monohull boats in each class will be recognized with trophies five class.

The first attention signal will be given at 12:30 EDT from the starting line set approximately four nautical miles from Marion's Sippican Harbor. The four classes start at fifteen-minute intervals. The multihull sequence starts on Saturday at 11:00 EDT and there will be one start for the two multihull entries.



On their way out of Buzzards Bay, yachts stay West of Penikese Island and the Sow & Pigs Reef buoy then sail the 645-nauticle mile Atlantic Ocean course across the Gulf Stream to the finish off St. David's Lighthouse, Bermuda. On their approach to Bermuda the yachts must stay to seaward (East) of four marks lining Bermuda's northern reefs ... North Rock Beacon, Kitchen Shoal Beacon, Mills Breaker Buoy and the St. George's Channel Sea Buoy.



Bermuda Sailors invade Marion

Monohulls start June 19th. Multihulls to follow the next day.

Marion, Massachusetts, June 17, 2009: Crews of two of the three Bermuda yachts entered in the 2009 Marion Bermuda Race were on hand in Marion, Massachusetts Tuesday preparing for the Friday start of the 17th sailing of this prestigious event. As the starting time approaches, they will be joined by about a thousand sailors... crews of

48 boats plus their friends and families, for weather briefings, the skippers meeting and, of course, a few famous Dark 'n Stormy cocktails at the Beverly Yacht Club.

With favorable winds and currents that are now predicted for the 645-mile ocean racecourse, the invasion of Bermuda should begin sometime early on Monday morning. David Caso's Cherubini 44 Silhouette will be on hand to defend her 2007 title, but will be pushed in these conditions by some top quality competition.

Paul Hubbard, sailing *Bermuda Oyster* will defend the SAIL Magazine Bermuda Ocean Cruising Yacht Trophy he captured in last year's Newport Bermuda Race for his top combined performance in the 2007 Marion and 2008 Newport races to Bermuda. Caso took the trophy following the 2007 Marion race.

Jonathan Brewin's *Big Bear* and Jonathan Baxter's *Pond Prowler*, both also from Bermuda, were anchored in Marion's Sippican Harbor, just off the lawn of Faith and Charlie Paulsen's home where Tom Farquhar, Chairman of the Marion Bermuda Cruising Yacht Race Board of Trustees, and Graham Quinn, Executive Director, praised the work of volunteers who have braved tough economic times to build a fleet of 48 entries for this year's race.

Quinn explained that the race typically has a larger turnout, but that race organizers met in Bermuda last November and targeted the 2009 budget for a fleet of close to fifty entries. "We are proud that with all the hard work from volunteers we reached our goal and expect forty-six monohulls and two multihulls to participate this year," he said.

Marion Bermuda Race Marketing Chairman, Ray Cullum was asked to compare this turnout with previous years. "In 2007 we had 72 starters and we have 48 registered now. We think the regulars are back but the first-time participation is off," he said. "We usually have about one half of the fleet as first time participants. This year it is one third.

"Participation," he continued, "is exactly what the committee expected this year and planned accordingly. In the past we typically get about 50% repeat from the year before and 50% new. We figured that the repeat would hold due to the sunk costs and the new would fall off...exactly what happened. If you extrapolated the current participants based on that formula we would have 80 boats."

When asked about comparisons between quantity and quality of this year's fleet, Cullum concluded, "Again I believe it was a function of the

economy... look at other big events this year, Key West had 240 boats in 2008 vs. 160 boats in 2009. Marblehead to Halifax had 140 in 2007 vs. 85 projected entries in 2009. Local regatta's still seem to be healthy...no long travel time, little onsite cost, less preparation and more crew choices. There are some strong sailing resumes in this year's race plus the mentor program (a new program that paired newcomers with race veterans) added two boats that would not have participated without guidance and support."

We are working double hard with Royal Hamilton Amateur Dinghy Club, our partners in Bermuda, to make this the best Marion to Bermuda Race yet with plenty of pre-race activities and more fun at the finish," Cullum added. "Not one activity/event has been eliminated for this year's race. In fact, the change to the Royal Naval Dockyard for the Award Ceremony is a fantastic upgrade and a fantastic fit as part of Bermuda's 400th anniversary celebration."

Race and activity information for the 2009 Marion to Bermuda Cruising Yacht Race is on-line at <http://www.marionbermuda.com>.

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About Marion to Bermuda 2009

Exciting events are planned in Bermuda for race chasers as the boats sail the 645-mile course almost due south across the oft-treacherous Gulf Stream current to the islands. More events are planned for the sailors after their arrival.

Centered around the Bermuda islands' 400th Anniversary celebrations, the Bermuda festivities planned for sailors, friends and families start with lighthouse tours and a St. David's Cultural Indian festival on June 20-21st.

Festivities wrap up on June 27th with the prizegiving at the historic Commissioners House at Dockyard followed by a gala banquet in the Keep. The 400th Anniversary *We are Sailing* exhibit presented by the Masterworks Foundation will be a highlight of the week for visitors.

A new Marion to Bermuda blog site, ***Race Chat*** on the website menu bar, has been developed to answer questions for both experienced

hands and first timers looking for help. Organizers will also be offering a new mentoring system. First timers will be linked with an experienced Marion to Bermuda skipper for one-on-one help and guidance throughout their entry process.

The race structure for 2009 is very similar to the 2007 race. Boats will sail for a host of prizes under both ORR and IRC rating rule handicaps. Both multihulls and monohulls from 32 to 80 feet on deck are entered. All entries meet ISAF requirements for a Category 1 race as modified by the Notice of Race.

Yachts choosing to sail with celestial navigation only receive a favorable 2% rating credit to their corrected time. They compete alongside yachts using electronic navigation for overall prizes. The 2% rating credit reflects the statistical difference between celestial and electronic performance in the past three Marion to Bermuda Races.

Since its inception in 1977, the Marion – Bermuda Race has been a Corinthian event and yachts are accepted by invitation. The spirit of the race is that all yachts and crew are participating for the joy and pleasure of sailing, competition, and the camaraderie that accompanies such an offshore event.

The race provides an opportunity for cruising yachts and amateur crews to participate in an ocean race and a rendezvous in Bermuda. It encourages the development of blue water sailing skills on seaworthy yachts that can be handled safely offshore with limited crew. Yachts may not be entered with an intention of furthering a commercial or trade purpose for captain, crew or sponsor.

The Marion to Bermuda Cruising Yacht Race is organized by The Beverly Yacht Club, The Blue Water Sailing Club and The Royal Hamilton Amateur Dinghy Club for the Marion Bermuda Cruising Yacht Race Association.