

For Immediate Release
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2008 C. Thomas Clagett Jr. Memorial Regatta

Paralympians to Compete in Newport

Blind Sailors Will Race For National Title

NEWPORT, R.I. (August 14, 2008) – Less than a month before the 2008 Paralympic Games get underway in Beijing, China, sailors representing the USA and Canada will take to the waters of Narragansett Bay to enhance their preparedness by competing in the 2008 C. Thomas Clagett Jr. Memorial Regatta at Sail Newport, Rhode Island's Public Sailing Center, from August 17-21. Not only will the sailors with disabilities be competing, but also blind sailors who are joining the event for the first time and who will be racing for the 2008 Blind Sailing National Championship title.

Of the USA's six Paralympian sailors, all will race in the Clagett with the exception of one – Skud-18 skipper Nick Scandone (Fountain Valley, Calif.) is battling ALS and is conserving his energy in order to be fit for Beijing. His crew, Maureen McKinnon-Tucker (Marblehead, Mass.) will sail with her husband Dan Tucker. John Ruf (Pewaukee, Wisc.) will race in the 2.4 Metre event, and Rick Doerr (Clifton, N.J.), Bill Donohue (Brick, N.J.) and Tim Angle (Somerville, Mass.) will race in the Sonar class.

The six Canadian Paralympic Team members – competing in the event for the first time – will surely give the Americans some stiff competition. "The biggest reason for going to the Clagett is to get some good quality racing with good competition and [practice in the] current before I head to the Paralympics in September," said Paul Tingley (Halifax, Nova Scotia) who is Canada's 2000 Sonar Paralympic Bronze Medalist and who has made the switch to the 2.4 Metre class for China. In the Skud-18, John McRoberts will race with Stacie Louttit (both Victoria, British Columbia). McRoberts won a gold medal at the 1996 Paralympic Games in Atlanta when sailing appeared as an exhibition event that attracted 15 nations. (Paralympic sailing made its debut as a full-medal sport at the Sydney Games in 2000, in two classes -- the Sonar and the 2.4 Metre.) The all-Victoria team of skipper Ken Kelly, with Don Terlson and Marc Shaw will compete in the Sonar. Kelly is another veteran of the 1996 Paralympic Games where he won a silver medal in the exhibition event.

Since its inception six years ago, the core of "The Clagett" has been the one-day clinic (this year on

August 18) prior to the beginning of racing which gives the sailors access to advice from elite-level coaches. The theme of developing talent among sailors with disabilities has expanded this year to include blind sailors who will participate in the clinic and also receive on-the-water coaching to improve their technique.

Among the fleet of blind sailors who will be racing in Sail Newport's fleet of J/22s are several who have competed here to notable success. Sengil Inkiala (Watertown, Mass.) and Deborah Keating (Woburn, Mass.) won the bronze medal in the B-1 Division (blind), while Matt Chao (Boston, Mass.) took the bronze medal in the B-2 Division (visually impaired) at the 2006 IFDS Blind Sailing World Championships. Chao will be defending his national title.

On the water action is set for August 19-21 in the three Paralympic classes. The blind sailors will race just two days -- August 19-20 -- for the 2008 Blind Sailing National Championship title.

Additional information on the event can be found online at www.ussailing.net/Clagett/

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