



2008 Clagett Regatta Expands to Include Blind Sailors

NEWPORT, R.I. (February 21, 2008) – Building on its mission to provide sailors with disabilities the opportunity to hone their competitive skills, the 2008 C. Thomas Clagett Jr. Memorial Clinic and Regatta has expanded to welcome the participation of blind sailors for the sixth annual running of this event hosted by Sail Newport, Rhode Island's Public Sailing Center. Incorporating the 2008 Blind Sailing National Championship into the Clagett will not only work to develop the skills of sight-impaired sailors, but also will provide invaluable training for competitors preparing to compete in New Zealand at the 2009 IFDS Blind Sailing World Championship.

Scheduled for August 17-21, the 2008 Clagett Regatta will kick off with a one-day clinic (August 18) that has become the hallmark of the event and is planned to again feature world champion sailors sharing their expertise on everything from the racing rules to match racing techniques.

On the water, racing will take place August 19-21 in the classes selected for the Paralympic Games -- the single-person 2.4 Metre, two-person Skud-18, and the three-person Sonar. Sail Newport's fleet of J/22s will be utilized by the blind sailors who will race just two days (August 19-20) for the 2008 Blind Sailing National Championship title. The clinic and regatta is open to both U.S. and foreign competitors.

"We are very excited to welcome the blind sailors into The Clagett family," said event founder Judy McLennan (Newport, R.I.), daughter of the event's namesake. "The growth of the event -- from offering racing in Sonars (2003-2004), to include 2.4 Metres (2005), Skud-18s (2006), and J/22s (for 2008) -- allows us to fulfill The Clagett's goal of providing sailors with disabilities not only the knowledge and tools to improve their skills, but also the opportunity to test them in competition."

The C. Thomas Clagett Jr. Memorial Clinic and Regatta honors the late Tom Clagett (1916-2001), a U.S. Navy World War II veteran who learned to sail on the Chesapeake Bay. As a youngster he suffered temporary paralysis as the result of a bout of meningitis; it was an experience that left him with a deep respect for the accomplishments of people with disabilities, especially athletes.

Background on the event is available online at www.ussailing.net/Clagett/

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