



America's Cup organizers plan lab experiment off Valencia

VALENCIA, Spain (15 July 2010) – With a view towards helping determine if a monohull or multihull is better suited for America's Cup racing, event planners have scheduled four days of trials here to develop methods for making the racing more enthralling for fans, more challenging for crews and better portrayed on television screens around the world.

Concept papers for a new monohull and multihull design were issued on July 2 to independent rule writers in the United Kingdom and U.S.

The trials, July 22-25, will help confirm certain parameters of the new yacht, including reduced crew numbers to place a premium on boathandling.

Not only will the format of racing and type of boat come under scrutiny, but also television production.

The America's Cup Media Evaluation Team has solicited opinions from a wide array of broadcasters, digital media and technology companies in Europe and the U.S. on how to make the racing more dramatic on-line, on-screen and on TV.

Accepted standards of Cup racing are being challenged in the trials and no thought will be ignored in the quest to create the most compelling television production and delivering it to the widest-ever audience.

"We are testing many different concepts," said Russell Coutts, CEO of BMW ORACLE Racing Team. "Would making the first leg downwind instead of upwind be better? Can you have exciting boat-on-boat action with multihulls? Are there alternative race course formats which might provide more overtaking opportunities?"

The trials will be conducted with two pairs of X40 catamarans and RC44 sloops. 3D and HD cameras will be experimented with to see if the onboard action is more dramatically portrayed, and the race format testing will include downwind and reaching starts.

Guest helmsmen such as Roman Hagara of Austria and Murray Jones of New Zealand will lead the crews aboard the X40s. Hagara is a two-time Olympic gold medalist in the Tornado class and Jones raced multihulls extensively in the lead-up to the 33rd America's Cup Match.

Multihulls have been paired in the America's Cup only once before, during the 33rd Match last February. And while there were some exciting moments, such as stalls on the start line and port-starboard crossings at the windward mark, the jury remains hung on whether or not multihulls can mix it up in close proximity to each other or whether they offer the boat behind more opportunities to pass.



A pair of RC44s will provide the high-performance monohull baseline for the trials. James Spithill, the youngest ever America's Cup winning skipper will be at the helm of one of the two yachts. They will race short-handed, eight-person crews to see if that adds a level of drama to boathandling that would be compelling for television.

"Only by reviewing the accepted wisdom can we decide if there are smarter ways to challenge crews and excite fans," Coutts said.

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The America's Cup, first contested in 1851, presently resides at the Golden Gate Yacht Club in San Francisco, the home club of BMW ORACLE Racing. Only two other American yacht clubs have held the trophy – New York Yacht Club and San Diego Yacht Club. On February 14, 2010, off Valencia, Spain, BMW ORACLE Racing defeated Team Alinghi 2-0 to win the Cup. Intensive planning for the next edition is underway, with the 34th Cup Match expected in 2013 or 2014 at a venue to be determined by the American team.