



All-American Offshore Team 2011

Leading a New Generation of Offshore Sailors

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Kirsten Ferguson, Media Pro Int'l, kirsten.ferguson@mediapronewport.com, 401.849. 0220, or Jesse Fielding, All-American Offshore Team jessefielding@gmail.com, 401.741.3166

(March 23, 2011) – In announcing the members of its 2011 sailing roster, [The All-American Offshore Team \(AAOT\)](#) is setting a course for a new generation of sailors to move into open ocean racing. Leading by example, the AAOT hopes to jumpstart a movement to foster youth opportunities in offshore racing as they will do aboard the STP65 *Vanquish* which will compete in four key events this year: the 66th Storm Trysail Club's Around Block Island Race; the Annapolis to Newport Race; the Transatlantic Race (Newport, R. I. to The Lizard, England) and the Rolex Fastnet Race. AAOT is committed to providing "high-performance offshore training opportunities for an up and coming generation of American ocean racing leaders" and went through a detailed selection process before making final team selections for 2011.

The age range for AAOT was modeled on the age cutoff for the Volvo Ocean Race with nine sailors between the ages of 18 and 30 selected to join the AAOT Management Team of Charlie Enright (Bristol, R.I.), Chris Branning (Pace, Fla.), Jesse Fielding (Wickford, R.I.), Mark Towill (Kaneohe, Hawaii) and Matt Noble (Richmond, Calif.). The 2011 All-American Offshore Team represents nine different states with an onboard average age of 23.

"In just four weeks we received over 250 applications," said Towill, general manager for AAOT. "What it really came down to was offshore sailing experience and the diversity of additional qualifications. Our schedule doesn't allow for much training and it's vital that we put our best foot forward."

Though the team has been selected for the summer of 2011, AAOT hopes to increase its future sailing schedule so that they can include other applicants down the road. "We want it to be clear that all 250 who applied are considered to be a part of the All-American Offshore Team movement," said Fielding, operations and communications manager for AAOT. "This is just the group that will be participating this summer."

Most AAOT team members are bringing more than just sailing expertise to the table: Colin Orsini (Seattle, Washington) is a personal trainer, former firefighter, and is well experienced in the boat building arena; Pat Showell (Sweetwater, N.J.) is a licensed captain, certified EMT, and an engineer; while Branning is currently in training to become a U.S. Coast Guard helicopter pilot.

“Each and every team member was selected for a reason,” said Enright, sailing team manager for AAOT. “We are very proud of the team we’ve assembled and feel like we have a great chance to succeed on the offshore racing circuit this summer.”

Nate Fast (Noank, Conn.), the youngest member of the team, is looking forward to working with sailors that have inspired him in the past. “I was too young to participate when the *Morning Light Project* was underway but I always admired the crew,” said Fast. “Offshore racing is completely different than any other type of racing. There is so much complexity and it requires large amounts of detail and work.” The 19-year-old, who has competed in sailing regattas since he was on the junior racing circuit, has been sailing keelboats for the past four years as well as competing for his college team at Webb Institute (Glen Cove N.Y.). Fast’s most significant achievements include a first-place finish in the IRC division of the 2007 Block Island Race Week presented by Rolex aboard the R/P 66 *Blue Yankee*, as well as his first offshore racing experience in the 2008 Newport to Bermuda Race aboard the J/44 *Vamp*. “Being the youngest means I will definitely be working that much harder to prove myself, which will probably help me in the end.”

Molly Robinson (San Francisco, Calif.) is one of two women on the 2011 All-American Offshore Team. “In sixth grade my parents took me out of school for six months to sail to the Caribbean and ever since I’ve wanted to get back into open ocean sailing,” said Robinson, who sailed competitively for the College of Charleston Sailing Team in Charleston, South Carolina. “Being part of AAOT is a dream come true and I know it will be a life-changing experience.” Robinson brings specific knowledge to AAOT from her past experience as a sail maker for North Sails in Auckland, NZL, and as a water purification expert with Spectra Watermakers.

The next order of business begins in late May, prior to Storm Trysail Club’s Around Block Island Race, when the full team will congregate at U.S. Merchant Marine Academy headquarters in New York, N.Y., to participate in the Safety at Sea Seminar and begin their first practice. In early June, the 2011 AAOT will relocate to Annapolis, Maryland, for the start of the Annapolis to Newport Race, followed by an offshore training session, which will be held as the final preparation for the 2,975 nautical mile Transatlantic Race from Newport, R.I., to the Lizard, U.K. The team will remain in the U.K. to prepare for the Rolex Fastnet Race which starts in Cowes in August.

More About the All-American Offshore Team

AAOT is an extension of the non-profit U.S. Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA) Sailing Foundation. Foundation President Ralf Steitz hatched the idea for AAOT early in January, 2011, when his long-held desire to create a youth-driven effort in the sport of ocean racing was reawakened by a German youth team’s entry in the 2011 Transatlantic aboard the Andrews 56 *Norddeutsche*. The concept was quickly endorsed by USMMA and other leaders in the sailing world, including Oakcliff Sailing Center and the Storm Trysail Club. Along with Steitz, the newly formed AAOT Advisory Board includes Oakcliff Sailing Center’s Executive Director Dawn Riley and USMMA’s Waterfront Director Chris Gasiorek.

To learn more about the All-American Offshore Team, visit <http://allamericanoffshoreteam.org/> or contact Jesse Fielding, jessefielding@gmail.com, 401-741-3166. Tax-deductible contributions can be sent to the USMMA Sailing Foundation at Yocum Sailing Center, 300 Steamboat Road, Kings

Point, New York, NY 11024, made payable to the USMMA Sailing Foundation with All-American Offshore Team in the memo.

2011 All-American Offshore Team

Benjamin Allen (Newport, R.I.), age 24
Benjamin Quatromoni (Newport, R.I.), age 23
Charlie Enright (Bristol, R.I.), age 26
Chris Branning (Pace, Fla.), age 25
Chris Welch (Gross Pointe, Mich.), age 23
Colin Orsini (Seattle, Wash.), age 27
David Rasmussen (Novato, Calif.), age 24
Jesse Fielding (Wickford, R. I.), age 24
Kaity Storck (Huntington, N. Y.), age 23
Mark Towill (Kaneohe, Hawaii), age 22
Matt Noble (Richmond, Calif.), age 25
Molly Robinson (San Francisco, Calif.), age 23
Nate Fast (Noank, Conn.), age 19
Pat Showell (Sweetwater, N. J.), age 24