



Rolex Big Boat Series

New Events Raise the Bar

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF. (May 10, 2011) – With San Francisco receiving extra attention from sailing fans courtesy of the America's Cup, it comes as no surprise that the Bay will be bustling with additional activity this fall when the 2011 Rolex Big Boat Series gets underway. Scheduled for September 8-11 and hosted by St. Francis Yacht Club, the event is in its 47th year and shows no signs of slowing down. With the Farr 30s having designated the event as their world championship and the sport boat division returning for its second year, the Rolex Big Boat Series is perfectly positioned to give serious racers their chance to shine at the West Coast's premier event.

"With the America's Cup now coming to town, there is a whole new energy on the water and people are more eager to sail in the same venue," said Chairman Norman Davant. "We are forecasting an excellent turnout."

The Rolex Big Boat Series will also be the focal point of a newly created four-regatta series for IRC 52s and 40s, providing a venue for East and West Coast competitors to continue their established rivalries, or begin new ones. The Rolex Big Boat Series will be the second race of the series which starts with the Aldo Alessio Ocean Race (August 26-28). The third and fourth events in the series are the new West Coast Shootout (September 24-25) and the Great Pumpkin Regatta (October 29-30), considered a San Francisco classic.

"We announced the four-regatta series back in March 2011, and it promises to be a great way to bring even more enthusiasm to the Bay and attract East Coast competitors," added Davant.

One of the movers and shakers in the Southern California IRC 52 fleet is Manouch Moshayedi (Newport Beach, Calif.), owner of *Rio*. "It's a great regatta, with consistent wind, and both the city and St. Francis Yacht Club are fantastic," said Moshayedi, whose fleet is expecting about 12 boats come September. No stranger to the regatta, Moshayedi previously competed on his IMS 50 *M-Project*; this will be the first Rolex Big Boat Series in which Moshayedi will race on *Rio*. "The IRC 52 is a new boat for me, and as far as I can see it's the most fun boat on the water today but also very technical; therefore, training and practice are crucial."

Having raced as a class at the Rolex Big Boat Series for over a decade, the J/120 fleet will also be back to continue its tradition of making the event a final hurrah of the sailing season. "We are a very competitive fleet, and there are superb sailors that come to this event," said Donald Payan (Hillsborough, Calif.), who has been attending the regatta since the 1980s and was the J/120 class winner in 2010 on *Dayenu*. "It's all about consistency. Any little slip can drop you from first to fourth in the blink of an eye. There is a premium on execution, and like a tango, every step has to be right."

Many sailors return year after year for not only the strong competition but also the overall atmosphere

of the event. "The Rolex Big Boat Series is a fun regatta to be a part of," said Payan. "It's a family reunion for the sailing community, and with the America's Cup activity coming to the Bay we are going to see more people showing up to sail and view."

The local J/105 fleet has also brought some serious talent in previous years, including Bruce Stone (San Francisco, Calif.), president of the San Francisco Marina Harbor Association and class winner in 2010 aboard *Arbitrage*. Stone predicts that like most years, weather is everything, and an early September date can dish up anything from gales to zephyrs. "The past few years have had some interesting conditions with either foggy days or some lighter winds, which made the tide calls quite significant," said Stone, who has been participating in the regatta since 1985 and looks forward to another spirited year of racing. "It's a wonderful event, with great race management and a perfect venue, which brings out more competitors so we have a full line-up of the best J/105s on the San Francisco Bay."

More about Rolex Big Boat Series

The Rolex Big Boat Series annually attracts many world-caliber sailors, all of whom are eager to win one of the six specially engraved Rolex timepieces given to winners of the St. Francis Yacht Club's Perpetual Trophies. From its inception, the Rolex Big Boat Series has showcased top sailing talent and boats. From the glory days of SORC, IOR and IMS to today's Grand Prix and One Design classes, the Rolex Big Boat Series has continued to be the West Coast's premier regatta where the best of the best meet for four days of challenging racing.

About Rolex Watch U.S.A.

Since Rolex Watch U.S.A. first presented timepieces to America's Cup defenders in 1958, the company has consistently recognized and encouraged excellence in every important arena of competitive sailing, including elite athlete preparation, US SAILING championships, disabled sailing, and offshore, one-design and women's events.

Rolex Big Boat Series joins other prestigious Rolex-sponsored events in 2011 including the Block Island Race Week presented by Rolex, New York Yacht Club Invitational Cup presented by Rolex, Rolex Miami OCR, Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup, Rolex Fastnet Race, Rolex Farr 40 World Championship, Rolex Big Boat Series, Rolex International Women's Keelboat Championship, Rolex Osprey Cup and the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race.

About the St. Francis Yacht Club

The St. Francis Yacht Club was founded in 1927 and has been host to many of the most prestigious national and international championships in sailing. With over 40 regattas on its calendar annually, and as home to the West Coast's premier regatta, the Rolex Big Boat Series, the St. Francis Yacht Club is widely regarded as having the top racing program and race management in the country.

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