



Rolex Big Boat Series “Fast Forties” Class Kicks Up Competition



Richard Courcier's Farr 36 *WICKED* in IRC C
(Rolex / Daniel Forster)

San Francisco, Calif. (August 18, 2011) – With the early registration deadline of September 1 fast approaching for the 2011 Rolex Big Boat Series, organizers at St. Francis Yacht Club have kicked up competition a few notches with the introduction of the “Fast Forties” Class for light displacement, asymmetrical sprit boats that range between 36 and 46 feet. Scheduled for September 8 – 11, the Rolex Big Boat Series is in its 47th year and will also host the Farr 30 World Championships.

The Fast Forties Class includes J/111s, Santa Cruz 37s, Farr 36s, J/125s and Farr 400s. “Providing a division where boats of similar characteristics can race together just makes sense,” said Regatta Chairman Norman Davant, “especially when it has been proven time and again that the rating systems work very well under these circumstances.”

Viggo Torbensen (Laguna Beach, Calif.) is making his way up from Southern California to compete against Northern California rivals in the Fast Forties Class in what will be one of his first major regattas since purchasing the J/125 *Timeshaver* a few months ago. “This will be my first time sailing on the Bay,” said Torbensen. “I’ve sailed in Rolex Regattas before, and it is just immense fun with unbelievable organization behind it. This particular regatta is dominated by the local guys, and we are excited to step up and meet some new competition.”

Since purchasing *Timeshaver*, Torbensen has focused mainly on offshore sailing. “We do very well with boat handling, and our team is experienced. During long legs we rock out super fast downwind, but buoy racing is different,” said Torbensen. “Thirty percent of your race is right at the start, and one mistake can cost everything.”

Returning contender Dee Smith (Annapolis, Md.) sailed his first RBBS in 1977 and will also be competing in the Fast Forties Class with the brand new Farr 400 *Team Premier*, which is currently making its way from Dubai to the States as hull number three in the fleet.

“We’ve been sailing the prototype in Europe for a few months. It is a fun boat to sail; very light with a lot of power,” said Smith. “It’s hard to come up with a good rating system for this size boat so it’s nice that St. Francis has come up with a class that will be challenging and fair.”

Smith will bring with him a crew of nine, all top sailors but in their first regatta as a team. “The boat is expected to arrive September 1, and getting to the starting line is our first challenge and then do well enough to win,” said Smith. “I am from San Francisco originally and this is one of the best regattas in the world. It never disappoints with wind or current and both the city and the yacht club are great.”

Other Fast Forties currently entered are Richard Ferris’s (Tahoe City, Calif.) *J/125 August Ice*, Tim Fuller’s (Murrieta, Calif.) *J 125 Resolute*, and Richard Courcier’s Farr 36 *Wicked*.

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.

The 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 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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