

ANNUAL YACHT RACE RETURNS TO THE COAST

Race will begin near Ilwaco

BY ALYSSA EVANS

Come next week, 26 boats will make a splash as each travels north along Washington's coast.

The boats will participate in the Pacific NW Offshore Race, the annual yacht race that was previously known as the Oregon Offshore.

If You Go

Pacific NW Offshore yacht race

10 a.m. June 10 near Buoy 2

Meet sailors, view boats before the race

1 to 4 p.m. June 9 at the Port of Ilwaco

This year marks the 45th annual race, which is sponsored by the Corinthian Yacht Club of Portland. Participants will travel from Ilwaco, Washington, to Port Angeles, starting about 10 a.m. on June 10 near Buoy 2. The starting line for the race is drawn by former Ilwaco Mayor Mike Cassinelli, owner of the Coho Sally, who positions the boat in range of Buoy 2. Boats are then aligned along an "imaginary starting line."

"You can't cross the starting line until that 10 o'clock horn goes off. Then, folks race up along the coast, turn the corner into the Strait of Juan de Fuca, then race down the strait to Port Angeles and finish in the bay there in Port Angeles," said Dennis Damore, race captain and commodore for Corinthian Yacht Club of Portland.

The event will be the club's first since 2019, because the event was canceled in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

This year's event will look a bit different than previous years. Previous races ran mid-May between Astoria and Victoria, Canada, ahead of the Swiftsure, another race. This year, since the U.S. and Canada border is closed to commercial boats, the race is ending in Port Angeles.

Boats will arrive in the area throughout the week before the event, offering local residents a chance to meet some of the sailors and see their ships up close. On Wednesday, from 1 to 4 p.m., local residents can receive information about the race and view vessels at the Port of Ilwaco as part of a special event featuring live music and local mermaids.

"The skippers are pretty welcoming people. Whether they'll allow anyone onto their boat is up to the individual skipper ... but more often than not, we'll invite them on



Colin Murphey/The Astorian

A sailboat heads out of the marina at the Port of Astoria to begin the 2019 Oregon Offshore yacht race.

board," Damore said. "We're hoping we'll get some people from the local community to come on down."

The Oregon Offshore began in 1976 as a challenge between Portland sailors Jack Gainer and Richard Kipp. The first race began from Astoria and headed south to Newport, for a length of 100 miles. The race's length and direction has varied over the years but has remained to last 193 nautical miles since 1991. The race's current record is about 14 hours, though most sailors take about 36 hours, Damore said.

This year's boats range in length from 30 feet to 70 feet long. The average crew size for a boat is six people, Damore said. He expects 150 to 200 people associated with the race will participate this year. About half of the participating boats are from the Seattle area; one is from Port Angeles; and the others are from Oregon.

"Coastal currents, the prevailing Japanese current and big tides can happen on the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The variability and the scenic beauty of it is really pretty unique, especially for the Northwest because we're the longest single segment offshore race in the Northwest," Damore said.

A photograph of Marie Powell, a woman with short brown hair, smiling and painting a colorful abstract artwork on a canvas. She is wearing a blue and white plaid shirt and a black apron with the 'marie POWELL GALLERY' logo. The background shows a workshop with various art supplies.



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