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Ready to Race at Quantum Key West 2014

Key West, Florida Keys - Some of the world's finest professional sailors will be crewing for captains of industry in the 52 (IRC 2) class, which is one of the headliners at Quantum Key West 2014.

Ran, the current 52 class world champion, is skippered by Skype founder Niklas Zennstrom of Great Britain. *Quantum Racing*, winner of the 52 Super Series last year, is skippered by Amway president Doug DeVos.

DeVos is also the primary investor in Quantum Sail Design Group, title sponsor of the regatta for the third consecutive year. As owner-driver of the Quantum entry, DeVos is blessed to have three renowned professionals providing assistance with Terry Hutchinson as tactician, Ed Baird as strategist and Juan Vila as navigator.

Those three are among a horde of pros with America's Cup or Volvo Ocean Race experience competing in IRC 2, which is comprised of six 52-foot racing machines that are highly technical.

"This is some of the best racing in the world. You have the top sailors, the best designers and builders, and with that you get the greatest competition," DeVos said. "It's an incredible class that gives the pro sailors a chance to develop and takes the whole sport forward."

Azzurra, owned by Argentinian pharmaceutical mogul Pablo Roemmers (Laboratorios Roemmers), captured the 52 class at last year's Key West regatta. Vasco Vascotto and Francesco Bruni, teammates on numerous Italian challengers for the America's Cup, serve as tactician and strategist, respectively, aboard *Azzurra*.

"It is a tough fleet and it will be very difficult to repeat. All the boats are capable of winning," Vascotto said. "We are well-prepared and looking forward to a great week of sailing."

Key West is one of the few regattas on the 52 Super Series in which the amateur owners drive their own boats – a unique element the professional crews enjoy. "We love having Doug driving the boat. He's the leader of the whole program and brings great energy to the team," Hutchinson said of DeVos.

Quantum Key West 2014 will feature five days of racing in 10 classes on the aqua-colored waters off the coast of the Conch Republic. From the professional-laden 52 Class to the family-oriented programs in the PHRF classes, there is something for everyone.

Newport-based professional Tim Healy will be back to defend his title in J/70 class, which has attracted a whopping 60 boats. Runner-up Brian Keane (Weston, Mass.) and third place finisher Bruno Pasquelli (Dallas, Texas) will also be back as the J/70 class contests its Midwinter Championship.

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"We're excited to be back in Key West and hoping we do as well as last year. There are a lot of really good teams here and it's really hard to say which ones are the top contenders," said Healy, who has John Mollicone and Geoff Becker aboard as co-tacticians and trimmers. "As usual, consistency is the key and you have to keep fighting all the way around the course. There are gains to be made on every leg and every point will count at the end."

Spectators on the water will be thrilled by the sheer size and speed of the racing machines in the Mini Maxi class (IRC 1). *Shockwave*, skippered by George Sakellaris (Framingham, Mass.) will look to defend its title against fellow 72-footer *Bella Mente* (Hap Fauth, Minneapolis, Minn.) and the 69-foot *Caol Ila R* (Alex Schaerer, Newport, R.I.). It was a match race situation last year with *Shockwave* defeating *Bella Mente* by four points. The addition of a third boat, although three feet smaller, adds some intrigue.

"The more the merrier. We'll probably still race head-to-head with *Bella Mente*, but the smaller boat could wind up beating us both on corrected time," Sakellaris said. "It should be a lot of fun. We love racing here in Key West. It's great weather, great wind and a great regatta."

Decision defeated sister ship *Spookie* in the High Performance Class at Key West 2013 and the two Carkeek 40-footers figure to duke it out again. *Spookie* won seven of 10 races a year ago, but suffered an eighth after wrapping the spinnaker around the keel and that enabled *Decision* to score a one-point victory.

"It was a bit of a heartbreaker last year. We had a disaster in one race that really cost us the regatta," Benjamin said. "We view *Decision* as very fair competition and are also looking forward to testing ourselves against the Farr 400 (*Rock & Roll*) and McConaghy 38 (*Riot*)."

IRC 3 is shaping up as one of the most competitive classes with 10 boats and a diverse group of designs. *Catapult*, a Ker 40 skippered by Marc Glimcher of New York, captured the IRC Sub Class last year, but will be challenged by an influx of new entries such as a Sydney 43, Ker 43, Mills 43 and four Swan 42s.

"We're very happy about the makeup of the class. There is a broad range of boats in there, some real fast boats," Glimcher said. "When you look at the 10 entries, there are some really competitive programs. Personally, I'm very excited about the competition we're going to face this week."

Groovederci, skippered by Deneen Demourkas of Santa Barbara, Cal., placed third at the 2013 Melges 32 World Championship and headlines a strong eight-boat fleet in Key West. *Hedgehog*, skippered by Alec Cutler of Bermuda, was the runner-up at the 2012 worlds while the Brazilian entry *Phoenix* (Sergio Rocha) has five-time Olympian Santiago Lange aboard as tactician.

"Every boat in the class is capable. There are no weak sisters," said Cutler, who did not race his Melges 32 last year while focusing on his Melges 24 program. "It's a big adjustment going back into this class. This is a very different boat than the 24 in terms of feel of the helm, angle of heel and target speeds. I'm having to relearn everything."

Teamwork, a J/122 skippered by Robin Team of Lexington, N.C., will be seeking a rare three-peat in PHRF 1. North Sails professional Jonathan Bartlett will once again be calling tactics for Team, who will also have his two sons aboard. Team is looking forward to duking it out with another J/122 (*El Ocaso*, Rick Weslund) and knows the four J/111 entries can do well in certain conditions. PHRF 1 also features a modified 1D35 and a J/125.

"We are a group of good friends who love to sail together and we come down here to have fun," Team said. "Of course, winning is a key component of having fun. I think the competition in our class will be tougher than ever. We are going to be challenged by some very strong teams."

Rush, a J/109 skippered by Bill Sweetser of Annapolis, has been a runner-up in Key West four times. Sweetser hopes to get over the hump this year while competing in PHRF 2, a seven-boat class that also features a Farr 30, Olson 30, J/88, Seascope 27 and Sabre 426.

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The consensus is that a three number PHRF handicap system provides for closer, more fair racing in a disparate fleet. This year Key West Race Week is employing a three-tiered rating system that is based on wind speed. Each boat's handicap can vary slightly different depending on whether the wind is light, moderate or heavy.

J/80 class has tripled in size since last year and will have 14 boats on the line as it contests its Midwinter Championship. *Vayu2*, skippered by Ron Buzil of Chicago, will defend its Key West crown against several seasoned teams, including former North American champion John Storck Jr. on *Rumor*.

Bill Wagner
Press Officer

For those who can't be out on the race course, there will be plenty of ways to follow the racing. Last year was a first for "Key West Live" coverage (**#QKeyWest**) and there will be more real time bloggers and video coverage to keep everyone connected this year.

Regatta dates are January 19 - 24, 2014.

Event Sponsors include Title Sponsor **Quantum Sails** and Day Sponsors **Lewmar/Navtec** (Official Marine Hardware), and **Mount Gay® Rum** (Official Rum). The Supporting Sponsors are **B&G** (Official Marine Electronics), **Marlow Ropes** (Official Rope), and **Gill** (Official Technical Gear).

Key West Race Week is also supported by The **Florida Keys & Key West Tourism Council**. The **Ocean Key Resort and Spa** is the Official Hotel. **Sapporo USA** is the Official Beer and **Regatta Ginger Beer** is the Official Ginger Beer. **Chelsea Clock** is providing their classic Ship's Bell Clocks for the Boat of the Day trophies.

23 Industry Partners bring their support through a program that is now in its 13th year. Quantum Key West 2014 is a **US SAILING** sanctioned event.

The racing will be conducted under permit in the **Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary**. The sanctuary protects 2,900 square nautical miles of critical marine habitat, including coral reef, hard bottom, seagrass meadow, mangrove communities and sand flats.

Event information, past results and photos: www.Premiere-Racing.com

About

Quantum Sail Design Group



www.QuantumSails.com

Founded by a group of independent, experienced sailmakers who shared a common vision, Quantum Sail Design Group is dedicated to overcoming the trend toward mass-marketing and mediocrity in the sailmaking industry. The company is known for its high-performance Fusion M sails and winning sail designs in dozens of classes from dinghies to super yachts.

Quantum has more than 60 sales and service outlets throughout the world, with world headquarters in Traverse City, MI and European headquarters in Barcelona, Spain.

[Key West Race Week Photo Gallery](#)

[Quantum Key West 2013 Results](#)

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