

## RACING ROUNDUP

MARK LLOYD / BRITISH AMERICA'S CUP CHALLENGE

# *The British Are Coming*

Sir Ben Ainslie (pictured above with Princess Catherine) helped engineer Oracle Team USA's improbable comeback victory in the 34<sup>th</sup> America's Cup last year when he joined the crew as tactician midway through the regatta. Now he's returned to his homeland to lead a British challenge for the Cup—and judging by his photo ops with Princess Catherine, Sir Ben's efforts have not gone unnoticed by the crown.

Ainslie will need more than a royal blessing, though, if he's going to dethrone Larry Ellison, Oracle, and the Golden Gate Yacht Club, which in early June finally unveiled the long-awaited Protocol for the 35<sup>th</sup> America's Cup to be held in 2017 in Bermuda or San Diego. Shockingly, San Francisco was eliminated as a contender to host the event after returning the America's Cup to relevance last year. "Given the tight timeline and demands from prospective teams to confirm the final venue, it has been necessary to continue reducing the shortlist of candidate cities," Oracle honcho Russell Coutts wrote in an e-mail to San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee, who's gone on record saying public funds would not be used to support the next edition of the Cup after the city lost nearly \$12 million on it last year.

The Protocol also confirmed that the boats for the 35<sup>th</sup> America's Cup will be 62-foot foiling catamarans sailed by eight-person crews. Teams have until August 8<sup>th</sup> to enter the competition. Thus far, only Oracle, Challenger of Record

Team Australia, Italy's Luna Rossa, and Ben Ainslie Racing are confirmed, with former champion Emirates Team New Zealand conspicuously noncommittal amid sniping and accusations exchanged between Kiwi boss Grant Dalton and Oracle skipper Jimmy Spithill.

### **"Tri"-ing for North Atlantic Record**

*Spindrift 2* is a French-built, 40-meter (131-foot) maxi-trimaran conceived for one purpose only: speed. Her latest goal is to shatter the record for fastest crossing of the North Atlantic (New York to Lizard Point, Helston, U.K.) set in August 2009 by Banque Populaire. That record is 3 days, 15 hours, 25 minutes, and 48 seconds—good for an average speed of 32.94 knots across 4,248 miles. But that's not all. *Spindrift 2*, skippered by Dona Bertarelli and Yann Guichard, is taking aim at the record for distance sailed in a 24-hour period, also held by Banque Populaire. That mind-boggling milestone—achieved during the same North Atlantic run in August 2009—is 908 miles at an average speed of 37.84 knots. *Spindrift 2* arrived in Newport, Rhode Island, in mid-June for modifications that would get her into race mode, and to await a suitable weather window for the crossing. Stay tuned to see if the lightning-quick leviathan sinks two of sailing's most glamorous speed records. 🦄

By **BRIAN HARTZ**