

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TOP LEVEL LINE-UP FOR WESTERLY ROYAL LYMINGTON CUP CHAMPIONSHIP

Seven countries are represented in this year's Westerly Royal Lymington Cup match racing championship. Apart from Britain, match-racing skippers from Australia, the USA, Italy, New Zealand, Canada and Germany will test their skills against one another on 14th, 15th and 16th May.

Although most of them are America's Cup pundits used to twelve-metres, they will be sailing this time in Westerly Fulmar 32ft cruiser/racers. Westerly Yachts have produced 11 new boats (10 plus a spare) for the event. Afterwards, the boats will join the fleet of the Westerly Sea School operating out of Hamble Point Marina.

The 10 skippers are:

Gordon Lucas (Australia). The Royal Lymington Yacht Club invited Alan Bond's "Australia II" America's Cup Defence syndicate to nominate a helmsman to represent them, and they are sending Lucas. He's an ex-Hornet world champion, and has a string of southern hemisphere championships under his belt as well.

Iain Murray (Australia). He is a helmsman in the rival Australian "Kookaburra" Taskforce 87 syndicate. He won the Round Robin series in last year's Westerly Royal Lymington Cup, but then lost to Harold Cudmore in the Final.

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Top level line-up - two

Chris Dickson (New Zealand). At the age of 24, Chris is New Zealand's most experienced match-racer. He won the 1985 Citizen Cup Match Race Series in Auckland, and is a helmsman in the New Zealand America's Cup challenge.

Stefano Roberti (Italy). Helmsman in the Azzurra Sfida Italiana America's Cup syndicate.

Chris Law (Great Britain). The British America's Cup Challenge was asked to nominate a helmsman. They named two: Chris, who was a finalist in the Westerly Royal Lympington Cup last year, and....

Eddie Warden-Owen (Great Britain). Eddie was helmsman in "Phoenix", top scoring yacht in the 1985 Admiral's Cup, and is a helmsman with the British America's Cup Challenge.

Terry McLaughlin (Canada). A very experienced match-racer, he is now a helmsman in the "True North" America's Cup syndicate. He skippered "Canada I", an unsuccessful challenger in the 1983 America's Cup, and won a silver medal in the Flying Dutchman class at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics.

Gary Jobson (USA). He was a Westerly Royal Lympington Cup semi-finalist last year, and won the 1985 Liberty Cup. He is a helmsman in the "Heart of America" America's Cup challenge from the Great Lakes.

Jorn Bock (West Germany). Helmsman of "Diva", 1985 German Admiral's Cup team. His inclusion in this year's list of invited skippers is indicative of German's growing interest in the sport of match-racing.

The tenth skipper has not yet been named. He will be the winner of the Westerly Crebbin Cup, an event held by the Royal Lympington Yacht Club to bring on potential British match racers. Phil Crebbin, who inspired it, laid down the ground rules: aspiring helmsmen and women 25 years old or less should be invited to apply for selection.

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Six of these are selected to compete against one another in Westerly Fulmars. The winner goes forward to meet the world's best. Phil Crebbin won the Royal Lymington Cup in 1976 and 77. He is now part of the management team of the British America's Cup Challenge.

The match racing will be held in either Christchurch Bay or the Western Solent, depending on the weather. Christchurch Bay is preferred because there is less tide there, but it is more exposed.

Spectators are welcome. The organisers make the following point: "By all means come and watch. Send off in advance to Westerly Yachts for a programme, or ask for one at the Royal Lymington Yacht Club. Don't obstruct the start line or any of the marks. Don't interfere with the wind of any of the competitors or slow them down with your wash. But if you do find yourself surrounded by twisting and turning Fulmars, stop and stay still.

The Westerly Royal Lymington Cup is sponsored by (apart from Westerly Yachts): Barlow Winches, Dubois Naval Architects, Kemp Masts, Ratsey and Lapthorn, Scott Bader, Volvo Penta, the Westerly Sea School, and XM Yachting.

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