



The Long and Short of It

EDGARTOWN, MASS., (April 11, 2017) — [Edgartown Yacht Club Race Weekend](#) isn't your typical regatta. For starters, it has two parts: one for the much revered and time-tested (79 years old) distance race around Martha's Vineyard and another for two days of short-course racing (added in 2012) in Edgartown's Outer Harbor. And no need to fret if you can't do it all. Only the 'Round-the-Island Race ('RTI) on Saturday, July 22 requires an entry fee, and to boot, each day of the 'Round-the-Buoy Races ('RTB) are scored separately, so if you can make one day and not the other, you can still win silverware in your class!

"Some years I do the buoy racing in addition to the 'Round-the-Island and some years just the 'RTI," said Stephen Besse (Guilford, Conn.), skipper of the J/120 *Après*. "I use a lot of family for crew, so it all depends on where my son is, where my daughter is.... For this year, I haven't yet decided whether to do both or not. The boat serves the family, rather than the other way around."



J/120 Après in the 2016 'Round-the-Island Race (Photo courtesy Stephen Besse);
Stephen Besse at the helm of *Après*. (Photo credit EYC/Jan Harley)

Besse has raced in the event on at least five different kinds of boats, and he has done the 'RTI every year since he has owned the J/120 (2009.) He Lives on Martha's Vineyard half the year, sails out of Vineyard Haven, and

takes *Après* across the Sound to Falmouth each year to put her up in winter storage.

Though he considers himself to be “basically a local racer,” Besse broke the pattern last year and competed in the Newport to Bermuda Race. He and his *Après* team wound up winning the J/120 class.

That bodes well for this year’s ‘Round-the-Island Race. Since J/Boat participation in the ‘RTI is typically robust (16 boats in 2016), event organizers have, for a second year, decided to expand the awards to recognize first-through third-place finishers, on corrected time, among all J/Boats in all classes.



The fleet leaves for Edgartown Yacht Club’s ‘Round-the-Island Race in 2016.

(photo credit Bill Brine)

“I’m fascinated with sailing around the island,” said Besse, who first circumnavigated Martha’s Vineyard in a Rhodes 19 at age 17 (he will be 68 in June). “It’s breathtakingly beautiful, particularly around Squibnocket Point, which you see when you go between Nomans Land, south of the Vineyard, and the Vineyard itself. It’s sand dunes on top of cliffs.”

Besse also appreciates the gentle slopes and beaches of Wasque as well as the iconic rounding at Devils Bridge and Aquinnah. “It’s one of the few races where I don’t have any trouble getting crew,” he said. “In fact, I’m usually *oversubscribed* for crew when it comes to the ‘RTI.”

Regularly attracting entrants from the Eastern Seaboard and beyond, Edgartown Yacht Club Race Weekend delivers exceptional racing opportunities for boats 28 feet and longer in classes for IRC, ORC, ORR, PHRF (spinnaker and non-spinnaker divisions), Double-Handed, and Classic. A Welcome Reception on Wednesday night (July 19); a Mount Gay-sponsored “jump-up” party on Friday night; and prize givings on both Friday and Sunday (July 23) round out the schedule for competitors who are entered in one or the other, or both, of the racing sessions.

Deadline for entry is Wednesday, July 19 for the ‘Round-the-Buoy Races and Friday, July 21 for the ‘Round-the-Island Race. For more information, go to <http://www.RTIrace.org> or contact raceadministrator@edgartownyc.org.

Edgartown Yacht Club will next host the Annual 12 Metre Regatta (August 11-13). For more information and to register for Edgartown Yacht Club sailing events, visit www.edgartownyc.org and click on the racing tab, or contact raceadministrator@edgartownyc.org. On Facebook follow [Edgartown Yacht Club Racing](#).

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