

Five Champion Yacht Clubs prepare for a 1000-mile Challenge of the Baltic in the 2018 Nord Stream Race

This June the Nord Stream Race brings together five of the highest-achieving yacht clubs from the National Sailing Leagues

Starting on 24th June, the Baltic Sea's best clubs to emerge from the 2017 season of the Sailing League will compete for the honour of becoming the "Best Yacht Club of the Baltic Sea". The long-distance regatta takes the fleet from Kiel via Copenhagen, Stockholm and Helsinki to the finish in Saint Petersburg.

Hamburg/St. Petersburg, 17 April 2018 – The best yacht clubs of the National Sailing Leagues from the Baltic countries Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Russia will come together again this year for the seventh edition of the Nord Stream Race, the long-distance offshore challenge which takes place from 24 June to 6 July.

Since its inception in 2012, the Nord Stream Race has been organised by the Saint Petersburg Yacht Club with the support of Gazprom and Nord Stream AG. The race is 1,000 nautical miles long and runs along the Nord Stream pipeline route. In order to qualify for the Nord Stream Race, each club first had to win its National Sailing League in 2017. The five clubs that have qualified and participate are:

- Norddeutscher Regatta Verein, Germany
- Frederikshavn Sejlklub, Denmark
- Kungliga Svenska Segelsällskapet, Sweden
- Åländska Segelsällskapet, Finland
- Lord of the Sail - Asia, Russia

As with last year's successful format, the clubs will be racing in a fleet of identical one-design 50 feet racing yachts. Generally, the race course follows the Nord Stream pipeline. The race will start in Kiel and finish in Saint Petersburg, with stopovers in Copenhagen, Stockholm and Helsinki. However, there will be a bigger build-up to the start of the competition as start of the Nord Stream Race will be held during Kiel Week, one of the biggest regattas and festivals in the world.

Founder of the Nord Stream Race, Commodore of the Saint Petersburg Yacht Club Vladimir Liubomirov, commented: "Kiel Week is the ideal starting point for the Nord Stream Race. With the sport of sailing, we all share a common passion and there is even a shared language between us. This is what is so important to us in organizing the Nord Stream Race, to build friendship and unity among our neighbors with whom we share this magnificent Baltic Sea. The race motto is 'Connecting Baltics through Sport', and that's what we found worked so well between the five teams who took part last year."

After competing in Kiel, the first stage of the Nord Stream Race takes the fleet to Copenhagen, right into the city centre opposite the spectacular Copenhagen Opera House. After the inshore races, the sailors set out on the race to Stockholm. This is the longest leg of the race and was the fastest part of the 2017 Nord Stream Race, with the high-performance racing yachts frequently achieving over 20 knots of boat speed.

After they arrive in the city centre of Stockholm, the Nord Stream Race competitors will combine with the ÅF Offshore Race, the famous race around the island of Gotland which has been taking place since 1937. The start out of the centre of Stockholm should be spectacular.

Once they leave Swedish waters, the race continues on towards a stopover in Helsinki, Finland, before the final sprint to the finish in St. Petersburg, Russia. Whichever crew wins the race can claim to be truly great all-round sailors.

The challenge of winning a series of short, sharp races in smaller one-design sport boats is one measure of sailing ability. However, the races in the National Sailing Leagues last only a few minutes. In order to succeed in the Nord Stream Race the crews will need to master a much larger and powerful 50ft keelboat in conditions ranging from light breeze to gale-force wind with big waves. It will require enormous reserves of mental and physical stamina and the ability to stay focused for hours or even days at a time. The seventh edition of the Nord Stream Race will be a life-changing experience for all who take part, creating memories and friendships that will last a lifetime.

About Nord Stream Race:

The Baltic offshore regatta Nord Stream Race has been held by Saint Petersburg Yacht Club with the support of Gazprom and Nord Stream AG since 2012. The 1,000 nautical mile race connects Russia, Germany, Finland, Sweden and Denmark and follow the pipeline that has given the race its name.

Further information: www.nord-stream-race.com/eng

About Saint Petersburg Yacht Club:

The regional public sport organisation Saint Petersburg Yacht Club was established in 2007. Its main mission is to maintain the ideals of maritime culture on land and on sea and to develop nautical sports, as well as to grow enthusiasm for sailing. The Yacht Club's philosophy is based not only on necessity to preserve, but also on a commitment to transfer to future generations the Russian nautical cultural heritage, along with Russian and world maritime history.

Further information: www.yacht-club-spb.ru/en/en

About Gazprom:

Gazprom is a global energy company focused on geological exploration, production, transportation, storage, processing and sales of gas, gas condensate and oil, sales of gas as a vehicle fuel, as well as generation and marketing of heat and electric power.

Gazprom views its mission as ensuring a reliable, efficient and balanced supply of natural gas, other energy resources and their derivatives to consumers. Gazprom's strategic goal is to establish itself as a leader among global energy companies by diversifying sales markets, ensuring reliable supplies, improving operating efficiency and fulfilling its scientific and technical potential.

Further information: www.gazprom.com

About Nord Stream AG:

Nord Stream AG is an international joint venture established for the planning, construction and operation of the twin offshore gas pipelines through the Baltic Sea. Russian Gazprom holds a 51per cent stake in the joint venture. Nord Stream's head office and operations centre are both in Zug, Switzerland.

Further information: www.nord-stream.com

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