



## CONGRESSIONAL CUP March 29 – April 2, 2017 Long Beach, California

**WHAT:** The longest-running sailboat match race regatta in North America. This 53 year-old event, occurring over five days, is fully run and managed by volunteers, features sailors representing multiple countries and uniquely offers in-person dramatic up-close viewing on a short course.

Like the America's Cup Congressional Cup is a match race. Match racing is when a group of identically matched boats race against each other in pairs. The race composed of a pair is called a match. The series of matches of the "pairs" is called a flight. Through the series of flights each skipper races every other skipper in the group. This is called a round robin. The top point winners over a set amount of days race against each other for the winning spot. Like America's Cup, Congressional Cup will be run over a short course visible to spectators on shore. Prior Congressional Cups have featured a number of America's Cup skippers, including Dean Barker, Dennis Conner, Ted Turner, Ed Baird, Jimmy Spithill, and Russell Coutts.

**EXCITEMENT OF THE RACE/EXPLANATION:** One of the most exciting parts of match racing is the pre-start, called the 'dial up'. Much like earning the pole position in NASCAR, the dial up determines who has the favored position for that race. The dial up is when the two skippers match wits in a 5 minute 'dance' immediately preceding the start of their race. Picture an imaginary box on the water. The pier makes the bottom, the starting line the top. The dial up starts with the skippers entering the area one from each side of the box. The goal is to get the best spot/wind and be as close to the starting line without going over when the starting horn sounds. Each skipper tries to earn this spot while pushing his/her opponent into a bad position or better yet to commit a foul. Umpires follow each pair of boats in small power boats. They call fouls immediately by raising colored flags. Skippers will sail directly at each other going head to head in a breath taking game of 'chicken' or sail right up to the starting line and almost sail backwards trying to hold their position. These skippers are so skilled at moving these large boats that the pre-race falls into an intricate game of cat and mouse with 37 foot yachts coming within inches of colliding into each other or being pushed into the pier. At the end of this five-minute pre-start chess game, the horn sounds and the race starts – two laps out to a buoy and back, finishing at the pier. The next pair starts their dial-up 1 minute after the last group starts to race – non-stop excitement!

**BOATS USED:** Equally-equipped Catalina 37 boats. The Long Beach Sailing Foundation (trustees of the boats) maintains them to an exacting, identical standard in all performance areas: weight, equipment, rig tuning and sails. (<http://www.lbsailingfoundation.org>)

To ensure fairness, each day the skippers use a different boat.

**SKIPPER SELECTION:** 12 Skippers will be competing.

- Defending champion Taylor Canfield (ISV)
- Reigning World Match Racing Tour Champion Ian Williams (GBR)
- 2016 US Grand Slam Winner Harry Price (AUS)
- Phil Robertson (NZL)

- Sam Gilmour (AUS)
- Eric Monnin (SUI)
- Nicolai Sehested (DEN)
- Chris Steele (NZL)
- Joachim Aschenbrenner (DEN)
- Johnie Berntsson (SWE)

The final 2 skippers will advance from the 2017 Ficker Cup, run immediately preceding Congressional Cup.

In order to qualify as a Grade 1 Match Race, the Congressional Cup must include a mix of international and national skippers who are highly ranked with the international sailing body, WORLDSAILING. Several skippers in this year's race are past winners.

**VOLUNTEERS:** This is the only Grade I match race in the world run completely by volunteers. The long-running success of Congressional Cup rests on the shoulders of the 1,000 members of the Long Beach Yacht Club. Through the years these volunteers have continued to introduce innovations and enhancements to the event while maintaining its rich history and traditions.

LBYC member-volunteers provide housing for the skippers, umpires and crew, make breakfast for everyone each morning, maintain the boats, support the media, and provide race management. Over 300 volunteers have pitched in to run and staff Congressional Cup 2017.

**WHERE:** All boats depart from the Long Beach Yacht Club (LBYC) in Alamitos Bay, Long Beach, CA. The sailing course is viewable (free-of-charge) from the up-close vantage point of the Belmont Veteran Memorial Pier, designated in the national register as Congressional Cup Stadium and located at 15 39<sup>th</sup> Place, Long Beach.

**HOW TO SEE THE RACE:** In person: Belmont Veterans Memorial Pier, Long Beach

**HOW TO FOLLOW THE RACE ONLINE:** Those who can't get to the waterfront can follow the action and see updated results on any of the following:

- **Host Site:** [www.thecongressionalcup.com](http://www.thecongressionalcup.com)
- **World Match Racing Tour:** [www.wmrt.com](http://www.wmrt.com)
- **Facebook:** [www.facebook/CongressionalCup](http://www.facebook/CongressionalCup)
- **Twitter:** @LBYCConCup
- **Instagram:** #concup @lbycconcup

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS:** Daily: Sailing starts at approximately 12:00pm\* directly off the Belmont Veterans Memorial Pier. There are multiple short races a day, depending on wind, with sailing finishing late in the afternoon.

\* based on weather and schedule

- Wednesday March 29: 1<sup>st</sup> day of racing.
- Thursday March 30: 2<sup>nd</sup> day of racing. Press Conference following racing.
- Friday March 31: 3<sup>rd</sup> day of racing. Junior Congressional Cup FJ race against Skippers. Press Conference following racing.
- Saturday April 1: 4<sup>th</sup> day of racing. Fleet Fun Race to the Long Beach Yacht Club with umpires and sponsors. Mini-press conference on the pier with select skippers following racing.
- Sunday April 2: Fleet race, semifinals and finals, Victory Parade on the water from Veteran's Memorial Pier to the Long Beach Yacht Club and Trophy Presentation. Mini-press conference on the pier with select skippers following racing.

There is free grandstand seating and a running commentary at the pier provided by an experienced Congressional Cup Commentator, Steve Steiner. Food services and restrooms are available at the pier.

### OFFICIAL SPONSORS OF THE 2016 CONGRESSIONAL CUP:

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**NOTE:**

There will be a Press Conference Thursday March 30 at the Long Beach Yacht Club, which will feature interviews with skippers and crew.

Press boats will be available for those wanting a short on-the-water experience during racing, Wednesday to Sunday - advance notice required.