

Winter no time for O.C. sailors to hibernate

February's Midwinter Regatta, Border Run keep yachtsmen challenged through otherwise slower months.

By **TAYLOR HILL** / ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

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Midwinter sailboat races will be held at the following locations on Feb. 15-16, with the racing classes noted.

Newport Beach:

American Legion Yacht Club: PHRF, PHRF Non-spinnaker
Bahia Corinthian Yacht Club: Harbor 20, Thistle
Balboa Yacht Club: Senior Naples Sabot
Newport Harbor Yacht Club: Junior Naples Sabot A, B, C-1, C-2, C-3

Dana Point:

Dana Point Yacht Club: PHRF A, B and C, J/24, Catalina 30
Dana West Yacht Club: Cruising Non Spinnaker

Mission Viejo:

Lake Mission Viejo Yacht Club: Balboa 13, Expo 14.2, Portsmouth, Jr. Sabot

More than 600 boats and 3,000 sailors are expected to set sail in the dead of winter on Feb. 15-16 for the 85th annual Midwinter Regatta.

Organized by the Southern California Yachting Association, the 25 race locations cover Southern California's coastline from Channel Islands Harbor down to San Diego, and even extend to Lake Pleasant, Ariz.

"It's about the tradition – this is really the first big sailing event of the year," said Peter Tietz, chairman of the regatta.

Created in 1928 by the Los Angeles Junior Chamber of Commerce, the event was made to showcase Southern California's sporting "paradise" during the winter months, while the rest of the nation waited for the spring thaw.

At its multiple venues, the regatta hosts a range of competitors in an array of sailing vessels. This year's event includes sailing classes including one-design mono-hull boats, multi-hull classes, dinghy racing and even model-boat racing.

"We've had really good turnout over the years in Alamitos Bay and Newport Beach, and we're encouraging more entries from Dana Point Harbor this year," Tietz said.

The following weekend, sail racers can head down to Newport Beach to participate in the first point-to-point, international ocean race of the 2014 season, the Border Run.

The race is scheduled to start Feb. 22. Organizers have changed the course of the Border Run, bringing it from its inception in 2009 as an alternative and competing race to the Newport to Ensenada International Yacht Race held each April into a complementary race that helps kick off the ocean racing season.

This year's event includes three different race courses for sailors of different experience levels, all starting off Newport Beach's Balboa Pier.

The long course covers 91 miles from Balboa Pier, crossing into Mexican waters, going around Coronado del Norte Island and up to the finish line just outside San Diego Bay. The short course is a 70-mile direct route from Newport Beach to San Diego, and the sprint course is a 14-mile run from Newport Beach to Dana Point created for small vessels such as dinghies, sailboards, kiteboards, kayaks and even paddleboards to compete.

For more information on the Midwinter Regatta, go to midwinters.wordpress.com. For more details about this year's Border Run race, go to theborderrun.org.

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