

St. Pete Yacht Club nears limit for Cuban regatta



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The St. Petersburg Yacht Club is nearing its goal for the number of boats participating in its St. Petersburg-Habana Race 2017, which launches from downtown St. Petersburg on Feb. 28.

The regatta has generated an enthusiastic response nationwide from the sailing community since it was announced Aug. 1 that the 107-year-old yacht club is reviving the St. Petersburg-Habana Race, which it staged from 1930 to 1959.

“We are excited about the growing number of entrants signing up to participate in this regatta, but I can’t say I’m surprised by this strong show of support,” said **Richard Winning**, commodore of the St. Petersburg Yacht Club and lifelong resident of St. Petersburg. “Growing up here, this regatta was always a big part of the culture of our city. The return of this regatta is as much about the people of St. Petersburg as it is about the St. Petersburg Yacht Club, and we are proud to preserve this piece of our community legacy.”

After finishing 284 nautical miles of competitive sailing, the boaters will enjoy three days of festivities in Cuba — including another 12-mile race — before heading home.

The 2017 St. Petersburg-Habana Race is capped at 80 boats.

The deadline for confirmed entry is Nov. 7, when all fees are due. The closing date for “People-to-People” travel packages is also Nov. 7, at 11:59 a.m.

The Cuba experience is not restricted to yacht competitors or members of the Club. Anyone can take part in a licensed “people-to-people” program associated with the race.

Boaters interested in further details about the competition can click [here](#) more information and access the notice of race. Click here for information on the “People-to-People” program. The St. Petersburg Yacht Club has brought in [ASC](#)

International USA to offer packages to people traveling by air. They consist of three five-day/four-night packages, and three weekend (three-day/two night) packages.

The St. Petersburg-Habana Race, conceived by **George “Gidge” Gandy** in the late 1920s as a promotional event for the city, first launched on March 30, 1930, at the St. Petersburg Municipal Pier. It quickly became one of the city’s signature events.

The event was suspended in 1942 because of World War II and resumed in 1946.

Military and political unrest in Cuba threatened the race in the latter 1950s, and it was last run in 1959, as gun-wielding revolutionaries patrolled the streets of Havana. Recent breakthroughs in U.S.-Cuba relations prompted club officials to reinstitute one of its most historically significant events.