

# SAN FRANCISCO KICKS OFF AMERICA'S CUP

**THE AMERICA'S CUP** World Series San Francisco at the end of August kicked off the first racing of the 34th America's Cup on San Francisco Bay with eleven teams participating to warm up to Louis Vuitton Challenger Series and the final match in 2013.

The first three days encountered fog and wind with freezing temperatures that was famously described by Mark Twain, "The coldest winter I ever spent was a summer in San Francisco." Five crews capsized during training sessions while navigating the winds and tricky currents. The sun and blue sky came out over the weekend, so were the huge crowd lined the coast and AC Village at the Marina Green where race-course was only a few yards from shore.

**DAY 1** Prada Team Luna Rossa, both Max Sirena's Swordfish and Chris Draper's Piranha crews won their matches 2-0 over China Team and Artemis Racing Red, respectively.

**DAY 2** Oracle Team USA Coutts and Spithill won first and second place in Fleet Match. Ben Ainslie's J.P. Morgan team made a successful debut riding on his London Olympic gold medal-winning wave. The two youngest skippers in the fleet began to make their mark on Youth Day at the AC World Series, China Team's Phil Robertson and Team Korea's Nathan Outteridge (both age 26), were up among the leaders early in the race, with Robertson leading around the first mark before falling back into the fleet. Outteridge was challenging for top spot and finished fourth just ahead of JP Morgan Ben Ainslie. Oracle Team USA Coutts won the Fleet Race for the day and Oracle Spithill in second place. I was among a lucky few got invited to the Louis Vuitton mark boat. Eleven boats racing towards us in high speed to cut turns nearly inches away from the mark boat we could almost touch them. Besides the extremely exciting position to watch the race, Louis Vuitton wined and dined us on boat. I was not joking when I told Jennifer Spithill who was on board cheering for her husband Oracle Team USA's Jimmy Spithill, "You could hand him a glass of champagne! We were that close!"

**DAY 3** Oracle Team USA Coutts (Russell Coutts) had to drop out after hitting the Race Committee boat at the start of Fleet Race. The four time America's Cup winner was trying to squeeze into a narrow gap between the Committee boat and his team-mate Oracle Spithill boat, but there wasn't enough room and a violent collision resulted. The top performer on the day was the recent Olympic gold medalist Nathan Outteridge and his Team Korea. In the first race, Outteridge battled Prada Luna Rossa Swordfish for the lead before penalty trouble dropped the Koreans back to fourth place. Luna Rossa Piranha placed second and Yann Guichard's Energy Team the third. In the day's second fleet race, Oracle Team USA Spithill pushed Emirates Team New Zealand (Dean Barker) to third place and Outteridge won second place.

**DAY 4** was all smooth sailing for Oracle Team USA. Coutts won semi-final over Artemis Racing White and



RUSSELL COUTTS RELAX WITH YOUNG FAN OCTAVIO BINDEL



FRENCH ENERGY TEAM SKIPPER YANN GUICHARD



YVES CARCELLE, CHRISTIEN BELANGER OF LOUIS VUITTON AND IT. GOVERNOR GAVIN NEWSOM



MAYOR EDWIN LEE, MARK BUELL, NANCY PELOSI AND COM-MODOR OF GOLDEN GATE YACHT CLUB NORBERT BAJURIN



FLEET RACE



TEAM SPITHILL



LOUIS VUITTON CHAIRMAN/CEO YVES CARCELLE WITH THE 2 CUPS



TEAM LUNA ROSSA



JIMMY SPITHILL AUTOGRAPHING FOR YOUNG FANS

Spithill beat Team New Zealand at Match Race. Spithill and Team Korea won top 2 spots in Fleet Racing.

**DAY 5** started out with the 2 Oracle teams battled over the trophy to win final Match Race. Oracle Coutts beat Spithill by one second, repeated their last match in Newport. Team Coutts had another incident when their guest racer Michael Johnson, the Olympic sprinter gold medalist, fell into the Bay from back of the boat. He was quickly rescued by service boat. Each of the AC45 catamaran can carry 5 crew plus one guest. The guest doesn't really have a seat and he/she has to move with the crew from side to side at all time. It's an exciting but dangerous experience. In the final Fleet Race, Team Spithill amazingly came from 9th place in the back of the pack to finish second place just three seconds behind leader Luna Rossa Piranha which nearly capsized a few feet in front of finishing line. This second spot win puts the youngest America's Cup winner Spithill, who just turned 33 while he raced in the last World Series Newport, at 86 total points to win the Series in San Francisco. Spithill credit his tactician San Francisco native John Kosteki for his experience on the Bay, saying, "I don't think anyone can know the Bay completely, but it certainly helps for him having spent a lot of hours out there." Oracle Team USA is the defender of 34th America's Cup. Successfully defending the Cup in 2013 can bring the 35th America's Cup to San Francisco again.

As always, America's Cup has great parties in the evenings. Sunday night's opening party were attended by Senator Diane Feinstein, Speaker Nancy Pelosi, San Francisco Mayor Edwin Lee, Charlotte and George Shultz and other political heavy weights mingled with America's Cup Organizing Committee (ACOC) Chair Mark Buell, Golden Gate Yacht Club's Norbert Bajurin and Tom Ehman among a couple hundred guests. Wednesday night, the America's Cup Event Authority CEO Stephen Barclay co-hosted with Napa Valley Vintners, the official wine sponsor of America's Cup. Thursday night, the ACOC preview party featured Sir Russell Coutts, CEO of Oracle Team USA in conversation with Lt. Governor Newsom hosted by Mayor Edwin Lee, Lucy Jewett, Mark Buell, Wendy Schmidt (Mrs. Eric Schmidt of Google) and Kyri McClellan. Louis Vuitton Chairman & CEO Yves Carcelle flew in from Paris just in time for this event too.

The second America's Cup 2012-2013 World Series is Oct. 4-7, 2012 following Oracle Open World Sept. 30-Oct. 4 and during Fleet Week. It will be quite a spectacle event that you won't want to miss!

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