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West Sussex Sailor Selected to Lead Team in World's Largest Ocean Race

Rob Graham, 38, from Angmering, West Sussex, has been named as one of the twelve Skippers who will lead a team in the 40,000 nautical mile Clipper 2017-18 Round the World Yacht Race. Starting this August, it is a challenge which will take a staggering eleven months to complete.

Rob is hoping his extensive experience of the Clipper Race will help his campaign. His partner, Alison Driver took part in the 2009-10 race as a crew member and since 2011 he has worked as a Training Skipper and mate, even getting involved in the commissioning and refit of the Clipper 70 yachts which he will now race round the world on.

Rob said: "Knowing the Clipper Race and boats the way I do is going to be a big help. It's also like doing the race is the only thing I haven't done yet, having built the boats and refitted them, trained on them, this is what's left to do and I can't wait to get started."

Since completing his Yacht Masters in 2005, Rob has chalked up more than 50,000 nautical miles including several ocean passages. Having already successfully sailed from Europe to Cape Town, South Africa, Rob is most looking forward to the infamous Southern Ocean Sleigh Ride to the west coast of Australia.

He explained: "Looking back on images and videos from the Southern Ocean Leg from previous races is incredible and to experience those conditions first hand will be something special."

Founded in 1996 by William Ward and Sir Robin Knox-Johnston, the first person to sail solo, non-stop around the world almost 50 years ago, the Clipper Race is the only event which allows amateurs the opportunity to become ocean racers as they face Mother Nature in some of the most remote locations on the planet.

Speaking on the Skipper selection process, Sir Robin said: "The role of Clipper Race Skipper is one of the toughest, but most rewarding jobs that exists in sailing. Not only do you have to be a highly capable sailor to be able to complete the relentless challenge of circumnavigation, you also have to be an excellent instructor and leader.

"I wish Rob and his team the best in their Clipper 2017-18 Race campaign."

The eleventh edition of this unique biennial ocean race will visit six continents and include six ocean crossings. Almost 5000 novices have been turned into ocean racers since the Clipper Race was started twenty years ago, though more people still have climbed Mount Everest than circumnavigated the globe.

Twelve teams compete on the world's largest matched fleet of 70-foot ocean racing yachts. Crew come from all walks of life and from all around the world, with over 40 different nationalities represented. Crew can complete the full circumnavigation, or one or more of the eight legs that make up the Clipper Race.

The Clipper 2017-18 Race will begin in the UK this summer and return almost a year later. The team with the highest total points at the finish wins the Clipper Race Trophy.

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To download high-res images and videos of the skippers, please register for free, immediate access to our media portal at <http://mediaportal.clipperroundtheworld.com/auth/login>

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About Clipper Round the World Yacht Race

The Clipper Round the World Yacht Race is the world's largest ocean race and is also regarded as one of the toughest endurance challenges on the planet. At 40,000 nautical miles long and taking almost a year to complete, it consists of twelve teams competing against each other on the world's largest matched fleet of 70-foot ocean racing yachts.

The Clipper Race was established in 1996 by Sir Robin Knox-Johnston, the first person to sail solo non-stop around the world in 1968-69. His aim was to allow anyone, regardless of previous sailing experience, the chance to embrace the thrill of ocean racing; it is the only event of its kind for amateur sailors. Around 40 per cent of crew are novices and have never sailed before starting a comprehensive training programme ahead of their adventure.

This unique challenge brings together everyone from chief executives to taxi drivers, nurses and firefighters, farmers, airline pilots and students, from age 18 upwards, to take on Mother Nature's toughest conditions. There is no upper age limit, the oldest competitor to date is 74.

Whether they choose to take on the whole circumnavigation or compete in one or more of eight individual legs, all our crew achieve something remarkable as they conquer some of the world's most challenging oceans.

The overall route is split into a series of global races and a maximum 12 points going to first place ascending to 1 point for twelfth place. The team with the highest cumulative points at the end of the final race wins the series, and the Clipper Race trophy.

The next edition of the race is due to start in summer 2017. For more information, go to: www.clipperroundtheworld.com