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## **Derry-Londonderry Sailor Selected as Clipper 2017-18 Race Skipper**

Conall Morrison, 35, from Derry-Londonderry, Northern Ireland, has been named as one of the twelve professional Skippers who will lead a team in the next edition of the Clipper Round the World Yacht Race.

The Northern Irishman, who began sailing at age eleven on Lough Swilly and has watched the Clipper Race fleet arrive into Derry-Londonderry for all previous three editions, is relishing the upcoming mental and physical challenge. He says: "It's always been a dream of mine to circumnavigate the globe.

"I've had many memorable experiences on the water, from sailing to kayaking, to surf lifesaving, but nothing that comes close to the feeling of competing in the Clipper Race. I feel my background in both racing and sailing instruction will help my team to gel and become better ocean racers."

Conall is the second Skipper selected from the region, after Sean McCarter, who led the *Derry~Londonderry~Doire* team to a fifth-place finish in the Clipper 2013-14 Race.

"Being from Derry-Londonderry, I know exactly what the race means to the city. I was on the banks of the Foyle to see the fleet arrive in 2016 and it's great to hear the Clipper Race will return to my home city next year. Sailing into Derry-Londonderry will be the proudest day in my whole career!"

Founded in 1996 by William Ward and Sir Robin Knox-Johnston, the first person to sail solo, non-stop around the world, the Clipper Race is the only event which allows amateurs the opportunity to become ocean racers and face Mother Nature in 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 Conall and his team the best in their Clipper 2017-18 Race campaign and as ever we look forward to returning to Derry-Londonderry in 2018."

Conall was previously the Skipper of Tectona for the 'Voyage of Recovery' in 2012, a twelve-week voyage around Britain to assist adults in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction.

The Morrison family is no stranger to global competition, as Conall explains: "My sister Aileen is a professional athlete [competed in the triathlon in the London 2012 Olympic Games] and my other sister Ruth was an Irish swimming champion. I admire their dedication and drive, and now it is my turn to make them proud!"

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 throughout the past twenty years of the Clipper Race, though still more people have climbed Mount Everest than circumnavigated the globe.

The twelve Clipper Race 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 next major event in the race preparations is Crew Allocation, at Portsmouth Guildhall, May 20, where all Skippers and crew will be assigned to their teams for the first time.

The Clipper 2017-18 Race will begin in the UK this summer and return almost a year later, once again including a stopover in Derry-Londonderry in summer 2018. The team with the highest total points at the finish wins the Clipper Race Trophy.

## **ENDS**

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>

For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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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](http://www.clipperroundtheworld.com)