

Antigua Racing Cup: Serious Sailing in the Caribbean's Sailing Capital



Few places on earth are as synonymous with sailing as **Antigua and Barbuda**. With steady trade winds, deep maritime heritage, and a race calendar that attracts sailors from around the globe, the twin-island nation has long been regarded as **the home of Caribbean sailing and one of the world's most respected racing venues**.

This April **during Antigua and Barbuda Regatta Month**, a new regatta steps confidently into that tradition—one designed with a clear purpose and built for sailors who love great racing

Welcome to the Antigua Racing Cup (ARC).

Running **Wednesday, April 8 to Sunday, April 12**, ARC is hosted entirely within the **UNESCO World Heritage site of Nelson's Dockyard**, the only working Georgian naval dockyard in the world and arguably one of the most atmospheric regatta venues anywhere in the world. Registration and the opening party kick things off on Wednesday, followed by **four days of racing and daily prize givings** through Sunday.

ARC may be the newest regatta on the Caribbean circuit, but its foundations run deep in Antigua's sailing story. The event emerges as the natural evolution of **Antigua Sailing Week**, drawing on decades of experience while creating something purpose-built for modern racing fleets.

A Fresh Approach to Caribbean Racing

Since its beginnings in 1968, Antigua Sailing Week grew into one of the Caribbean's most famous regattas. Over the years it welcomed everyone—from cruising boats and club racers to maxis and professional race teams. But serving such a wide range of sailors inevitably meant compromise.

The Antigua Racing Cup takes a different approach.

Rather than stretching one event to suit every type of boat, ARC focuses squarely on **high-performance race yachts, modern performance cruisers, and one-design fleets**. By separating the events, both regattas can now focus on the sailors they are designed for.

ARC is intentionally technical and competitive—built for sailors who want challenging courses and meaningful racing.

Courses Designed for the Boats

The philosophy behind ARC is simple: design the racing around the boats actually competing.

Fast boats thrive on powerful reaching legs and sustained speed. One-design fleets demand tight windward-leeward courses where tactics and boat handling decide the winner. Performance cruisers want racing that's exciting without being overwhelming.

By working directly with competitors, the race committee can shape courses that deliver exactly that. **Virtual marks** give race officers the flexibility to adapt courses to wind conditions and fleet needs.

Supporting the action on the water is a respected International Jury, led by U.S. judge Tom Rinda, helping ensure fair competition and trusted decisions.

Respecting Caribbean Traditions

The **CSA Rating Rule**, the backbone of Caribbean racing for decades, remains central to ARC. At the same time, many international teams arrive with **IRC certificates** from major offshore events.

ARC embraces both systems. CSA determines fleet divisions on the water, while IRC scoring offers an additional competitive layer—helping connect Caribbean racing with the wider international circuit.

A Growing International Fleet

Interest in the inaugural event is already strong. As of late January 2026, **19 boats had entered**, representing the **UK, USA, Canada, Barbados, and Antigua**.

The fleet ranges from the pocket-rocket **Melges 24 Whiplash** to professional programs like **Rikki** and race-charter yachts such as **Spirit of Juno**. Performance multihulls and one-design fleets—including **RS Elites and Diam 24s**—are also welcome, with organizers expecting **30 to 40 boats** on the starting line.



For sailors without their own yacht in the Caribbean, race-ready charter options make participation straightforward—arrive in Antigua and be on the water within hours.

Youth to Keel: Building the Future

ARC continues one of Antigua Sailing Week's most successful initiatives: the **Youth to Keel programme**.

Young sailors from the **National Sailing Academy** and **Antigua Yacht Club** can join visiting teams for real racing experience, building skills and connections with international crews.

Racing in One of the World's Best Arenas

The waters off Antigua's south coast offer everything racers dream about: steady trade winds, open Atlantic swell, and dramatic island backdrops.

Courses stretch between English Harbour and Falmouth Harbour, providing dynamic conditions that reward both skill and teamwork.

Shoreside Energy

Every afternoon, the day's sailing energy and history meet as the **regatta village comes alive inside the historic Nelson's Dockyard National Park**, framed by the centuries-old **Copper & Lumber Store Hotel** and the **Officers' Quarters**.

Prize givings on the lawn bring crews together to relive the day's racing over cold drinks, local food, and Caribbean music. Just outside the Dockyard, the **Wadadli Grill** keeps the social side going well into the evening.

A New Chapter

The Antigua Racing Cup represents more than another regatta on the calendar. It reflects a willingness to evolve—drawing on nearly six decades of Caribbean racing heritage while adapting to modern competitive sailing.

For a destination already known as the **home of Caribbean sailing**, ARC feels like a natural next step.

Serious racing. Legendary waters. And one of the most iconic harbours in the sailing world.

For more info, entries, results, photos, and updates, visit **www.antiguaracingcup.com** and follow along on social with **#AntiguaRacingCup** and **#SeriousSailing**