



Fastnet 2009

9–16 August

First 47.7 Azzurra

The race

The Fastnet race is the most famous offshore yacht race in the world – first run in 1925, when 7 yachts came to the start line off Ryde IOW to race to the Fastnet Rock off Ireland, and back to Plymouth. The modern race, over a course of 608 miles, starts at Cowes and attracts over 200 entries (the limit this year is 300).

The race is run in alternate years. It follows immediately after Cowes Week, in mid-August, but even in midsummer conditions can be challenging. In 2007 the start was postponed by a day because of a gale. In the infamous race of 1979, 15 sailors lost their lives in freak storm conditions. That tragedy led to many improvements in equipment and procedures, among them stringent crew qualification requirements, set out on the next page.

The boat

The First 47.7 is just about ideal for an event of this sort – exciting to race, but big, stable and spacious. Azzurra was commissioned in 2001. We have owned her from new, and in all important respects she is good as new. Last year she got a smart metallic blue wrap, shown here in the Round the Island Race. She has a full sail wardrobe including several new North Kevlar sails and three spinnakers. In preparation for the Fastnet she has been fitted with instrument displays at the mast and a hydraulic backstay. She is has both EPIRB and SART transmitters.

The skipper

We are delighted to have as skipper Tim Ionides, who is well used to Azzurra and other 47.7s (eg EH01) and to major offshore races including the transatlantic ARC and the Fastnet itself.



The guests

We expect to take 8/10 guests, so that there will be 10/12 on board, probably operating as two watches. You do not need to be an experienced racer, but you do need to be a competent and experienced sailor, happy to be at sea for a week, and willing to learn.

The package

Our package is designed to give crew members the best chance of a safe, enjoyable and successful campaign, and to ensure that when race day arrives the crew meets without any doubt the qualification requirements of the RORC.

The unique features of our package are its **low cost** and the **flexibility** it allows – you are not asked to confirm your commitment to the campaign until after the introductory weekend.

If you can't make all the preparatory weekends, that doesn't necessarily rule out participation. Get in touch so that we can discuss your involvement.

The package consists of:

- ◆ one introductory weekend in April
- ◆ one low-key Solent racing weekend in May
- ◆ three RORC races in the period May–July 2009, all of them finishing back at Cowes
- ◆ the Fastnet race, starting on 9 August
- ◆ return passage from the finish at Plymouth
- ◆ services of an experienced skipper and skipper-level mate
- ◆ all on-board food
- ◆ all other boat operating costs
- ◆ a smart embroidered crew uniform
- ◆ use of a smart, breathable set of oilies
- ◆ use of a lifejacket if you need it.

The package does not include Offshore Safety training, although we will want all members of the crew to have done it. We will arrange this training, for those who need it, at advantageous rates.

The costs and payment

The cost – the lowest you will find anywhere for a berth on a decent yacht – is £2,250, paid as follows:

- ◆ 25% by 23 April (£562.50)
- ◆ 25% by 7 May 2009
- ◆ 25% by 1 June 2009.
- ◆ the final 25% by 1 July 2009.

If for whatever reason you leave the crew after the introductory weekend, we will refund what you have paid but retain £300.

The campaign

Although it is possible if all goes well to do the necessary offshore qualifying miles in two races, we take the view that it is better to plan on doing three races. We have deliberately chosen races that finish back at Cowes, so that no time is 'wasted' on return passages from France.

The timetable is:

25 April	Intro weekend
9 May	Training weekend (JOG Solent races)
23 May	Malham round Eddystone race
13 June	Guingand marks race
25 July	Channel marks race
9 August	Fastnet start at Cowes
13 August	parties in Plymouth
16 August	back in the Solent

The campaign extended

We are considering offering the option of adding a fifth RORC race for those who wish to compete in the RORC championship (five results are counted for the championship):

4 September Cherbourg race

If only some Fastnet crew members want to add this race we could offer spare places to other sailors.

RORC training requirements

In the 12 months preceding the start, the skipper and at least half the crew must have completed 300 miles of RORC offshore racing in the yacht in which they will race.

At least 30% of the crew including the skipper must have completed training to Section 6 of the ISAF Offshore Special Regulations (see right). In the UK this means completing the RYA ISAF Offshore Safety Course.

The RYA ISAF Offshore Safety Course syllabus includes first aid and liferaft training. If in the last five years you have undertaken training such as sea survival, it should be possible to upgrade that training by undertaking modules of the Section 6 training course.

ISAF Offshore Special Regs Section 6

(Some paragraph numbers are missing because they do not apply to Cat 2 races.)

6.01 At least 30% but not fewer than two members of a crew, including the skipper shall have undertaken training within the five years before the start of the race in both 6.02 topics for theoretical sessions, and 6.03 topics which include practical, hands-on sessions.

6.01.3 It is strongly recommended that all crew members should undertake training as in OSR 6.01 at least once every five years

6.01.4 Except as otherwise provided in the Notice of Race, an in-date certificate gained at an ISAF Approved Offshore Personal Survival Training course shall be accepted by a race organizing authority as evidence of compliance with Special Regulation 6.01. See Appendix G – Model Training Course, for further details.

6.02 Training Topics for Theoretical Sessions

6.02.1 care and maintenance of safety equipment

6.02.2 storm sails

6.02.3 damage control and repair

6.02.4 heavy weather – crew routines, boat handling, drogues

6.02.5 man overboard prevention and recovery

6.02.6 giving assistance to other craft

6.02.7 hypothermia

6.02.8 SAR organisation and methods

6.02.9 weather forecasting

6.03 Training Topics for Practical, Hands-On Sessions

6.03.1 liferafts and lifejackets

6.03.2 fire precautions and use of fire extinguishers

6.03.3 communications equipment (VHF, GMDSS, satcomms, etc.)

6.03.4 pyrotechnics and EPIRBs

6.04 Routine Training On-Board

6.04.1 It is recommended that crews should practice safety routines at reasonable intervals including the drill for man-overboard recovery