



Champion Biggs returning to Dún Laoghaire with new boat

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DAVID O'BRIEN

Reigning **Volvo Dun Laoghaire Regatta** (VDLR) Champion skipper Nigel Biggs returns to Dublin Bay next week for this season's biggest **regatta** in a new boat and under the burgee of a different waterfront yacht club.

Biggs' new Checkmate XVI is the newest boat in the 415-boat Dun Laoghaire fleet, the Mark Mills-designed American-built C & C 30 One Design comes straight from action in Cowes and last weekend's Round the Island Race.

UK-based Biggs hit a top speed of 18.3 knots downwind off the Isle of Wight, enough to put him 29th fastest monohull out of some 1800 competing on elapsed time.

"It's all still very new," says Biggs, who will be sailing with a crew of six group one (amateur) sailors. At 30-ft in overall length the County Wicklow design is class one size but with speeds like that and a rating of 1.140 she goes straight into Dun Laoghaire's class zero for her Irish debut.

The brief for the new yacht was to 'throw the rating rule books out the window' and design a fast, stable, close-winded, easy-to-race one-design 30-footer that planes easily and leaves all other 30-foot performance keel boats in its wake. The final race of VDLR will show if this has been achieved.

Biggs sailed under the burgee of the Royal St George Yacht Club (RStGYC) for his 2013 'Boat of the Week' victory in an optimised half-tonner but two years later he defends in Royal Irish Yacht Club (RIYC) colours.

The sixth staging of the regatta by all four of Dun Laoghaire's waterfront clubs

415

The total number of entries so far for the **Dun Laoghaire Regatta** next week

has a total of 415 entries. Rumours the fleet could swell further by Thursday's first race might yet bring the 29 classes

close to 2009's record of 479. It is an impressive participation from 68 different yacht clubs across the Irish Sea, a total of over 3,000 sailors, 800 of which are visitors to the Bay.

Across the Bay, the top Irish boat at the Squib keelboat British National Championships being sailed at Howth Yacht Club this week is John Driscoll and David Cagney in sixth place.

The overall results in the 49-boat fleet were turned inside out after three light air races on Wednesday when most of the leaders ended up carrying a poor result. After five races sailed Malcolm Hutchings and Andy Ramsay of Royal Corinthian Yacht Club (RCYC) lead. Racing concludes today.

Forecasts indicate there should be no shortage of wind for this morning's first race of a nine-race Fireball National Championships off Dunmore East. The question is can anyone unseat Barry McCartin and Conor Kinsella who as well as being defending champions have made a clean sweep of the 2015 domestic regattas and finished fourth at last year's Europeans.

Third overall

Fireballs share the Waterford Harbour venue with the Flying Fifteen keelboats and the 420 dinghies. Youth sailors Peter McCann and Harry Whitaker from Royal Cork took third overall in the 420 at Kiel week, Germany last weekend. Douglas Elmes and Colin O'Sullivan of Howth finished fifth overall in the same 154-boat fleet. Both crews return to domestic competition at Dunmore East today.

■ In Monday's Sailing report, the owner of Equinox was incorrectly reported as Rob McConnell. Ross McDonald of Howth Yacht Club is the owner of Equinox that is the new ICRA Division 2 national champion and overall winner of the Sovereigns Cup that ended on Saturday in Kinsale. McConnell is the owner of division 1 entry Fools Gold from Waterford Harbour Sailing Club that placed second in her class.