

David Kenefick

Sailing

Press Release

David Kenefick aims at shorthanded offshore racing career

[La Grande Motte – France 14 November 2012] Young Irish sailor David Kenefick (21) announces today his shorthanded Figaro sailing programme for 2013.

With Irish ports hosting events as diverse as the Volvo Ocean Race, the MOD 70 European Tour and the Youth Sailing World Championships, and Irish sailors competing at the highest level around the world with Damian Foxhall winning this year's Volvo Ocean Race and Annalise Murphy finishing fourth at the Olympic Games so another significant Irish project gets underway.

The shorthanded offshore sailing discipline is extremely popular in France with big races like the Vendée Globe and Route de Rhum enjoying major media coverage and able to attract 100s of thousands of spectators to the start ports for every edition. Winning sailors become household names no matter where they are from or what they sail. The proving ground for all champion sailors is the Figaro class and its racing circuit. A frequent visitor to Irish ports this race is now in its 44th year and in 2013 will see only the fourth Irish sailor enter the prestigious competition.

"I'm really excited about this incredible opportunity to embark on a Figaro campaign. The number of offshore legends that have passed through and regularly compete in the Figaro class is unbelievable. This 32-foot racing class features water-ballast, two rudders, some pretty sophisticated autopilot and navigation routing electronics and is strictly One Design. There is a well-supported racing circuit with this class in France that culminates with the Solitaire du Figaro race each year," explains David Kenefick.

The Solitaire is a four-legged singlehanded race with each leg roughly 500 miles long. The stopovers between each leg are usually just 48 hours long making the personal and sporting management of the project absolutely crucial.

"I haven't been sailing in this class for long but I already have an appreciation for how tough this is going to be. I would say that a few weeks ago I didn't know what I didn't know. Today I am beginning to appreciate the complexity of this discipline of the sport plus obviously managing myself, my fitness and my commercial programme," Kenefick continues.

The sport of shorthanded offshore racing requires total commitment and years of practice, preparation and competition before skippers get to a credible level. From the moment in September that Kenefick decided to go ahead with this campaign every day has counted.

"There are just over seven months to the start of the 2013 Solitaire du Figaro race and everyday in my training schedule counts. My programme is being managed by Figaro veteran Marcus Hutchinson who has organised my boat and technical programme and secured for me a place in the elite CEM training centre in La Grande Motte on the French Mediterranean coast. We will be here for the next five months developing my shorthanded sailing skills to such a level that I can confidently compete in the Solitaire du Figaro in 2013," he elaborates.

The season will see several training races before the Solitaire du Figaro in June and then several other big competitions later in the summer.

"My season after la Solitaire will see me racing in Cowes Week and then tackling the Rolex Fastnet Race,

for which the Figaro class will have its own start next year. We are expecting at least ten boats to sail the race two-handed," he concludes.

The full schedule for David Kenefick's programme is as follows:

CEM Training Centre, La Grande Motte (November-March)
Icom Cup, Marseille (6-12 March)
Solo Concarneau, Concarneau (4-9 May)
Transmanche, l'Aberwrach (16-20 May)
La Solitaire du Figaro, Bordeaux to Dieppe (2 – 31 June)
Cowes Week (3-9 August)
Rolex Fastnet Race (11-15 August)
Two-handed Tour of Brittany (31 August – 7 September)
Generali Med (22-30 September)

Background:

The Solitaire du Figaro is one of the toughest yacht races for anyone to take on. It is sailed singlehanded over four legs of approximately 500 miles each with 48-hour stopovers between each leg. The event is now in its 44th year. Many of the champions of this class have gone on to win in other offshore events such as the Volvo Ocean Race and the Vendee Globe. The Figaro is considered the training ground for future champions. Three Irish skippers have competed in the past Damian Foxhall (1997 & 1998) – Marcus Hutchinson (1998 & 2000) – Paul O'Riain (2007).

David Kenefick

A native of Currabinny Co. Cork Kenefick has been sailing from a very young age from the Royal Cork Yacht Club. The classic path through Optimists and Lasers saw Kenefick win many championships before he moved into keelboats and offshore sailing. A keen kiteboarder David spends what little spare time he has now improving fitness, improving his French and making the most of French food and his culinary skills

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Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/DavidKenefickSailing>

Management Team:

Project Manager: Marcus Hutchinson
French Mobile: [+33609123989](tel:+33609123989)
Irish Mobile: [+353 86 244 1347](tel:+353862441347)
Email: marcus.hutchinson@me.com

Media Manager: Brian Carlin/Cube Images
Mobile: [+353879449469](tel:+353879449469)
Email: carlinbrian@gmail.com
Twitter: [@cubeimages](https://twitter.com/cubeimages)
Website: www.cubeimages.com