

## NEWS



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## TWENTY THREE COUNTRIES TO TAKE PART IN THE SEMANA OLÍMPICA CANARIA DE VELA

Sailors from 23 countries will be taking part in the 16th Semana Olímpica Canaria de Vela (Canary Islands Olympic Sailing Week), which was launched on Tuesday at Real Club Náutico de Gran Canaria. The skills level and the number of sailors registered for this iconic race in the Spanish series were deemed “a success” by the Club’s sports manager, Francis Bautista, who highlighted the attendance of sailors who’ve already qualified for the Rio 2016 Olympic Games and countries such as Russia, whose entire teams will be taking part.

The Russian, Lithuanian, Spanish and Portuguese Olympic teams and the Norwegian, Dutch and Turkish youth teams have brought all their members

to the event in Gran Canaria.

The Semana Olímpica Canaria de Vela is the first event on the Spanish calendar that will count towards entry into the Spanish Pre-Olympic sailing team. Several of the Club's sailors, such as Onán Barreiros and Juan Curbelo in the 470 class, Joaquín Blanco in Laser Standard, and Martina Reino in Laser Radial, will be working for their places over the long weekend of the race.

Lucas Bravo de Laguna, Head of Sports with the Gran Canaria Cabildo, and Mimi González, City Councillor for Ciudad de Mar (Sea City), were at the launch to represent the two local bodies sponsoring the race, described as the "the Club's most important event of the year" by Club President Óscar Bergasa, who led the press conference.

The Olympic Sailing Week is the longest-running event of the four races in the Gran Canaria Sail in Winter programme. After this race, which will be held from 4 to 8 December, the Gran Canaria club will be holding the Optimist Trofeo AECIO (26-29 December), Trofeo Isla de Gran Canaria (9-11 January) and the Regata de Carnaval (13-15 February).

One of the main innovations this year is the decision by European Region of International Laser Class Association (EurILCA) to start the Europa Cup series with the Regata de Carnaval Ciudad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. This has boosted the interest of Europe's top teams in taking part in the final race of the Gran Canaria Sail in Winter programme.

The RCNGC President announced that, for the first time, the Club is including Paralympic sailing in its winter races. The Club already has its team, comprising sailors Javier Ugarte and José Guerra, and several other European crews have confirmed they'll be competing in Gran Canaria this winter.

City Councillor Mimi González, who sailed at the 1988 Seoul Olympics, highlighted the Council's support for the Gran Canaria Sail in Winter programme and its importance for the city, which is promoted as a winter sailing base.

González said that the 2013 Olympic Sailing Week, in which 374 sailors took part, had brought in half a million (489,780.72) euros to the city of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. For the 2013 Gran Canaria Sail in Winter programme, 689 sailors from around 20 countries came to Gran Canaria and the city earned 900,000 (892,747.62) euros, in figures announced by the councillor.

"At the Gran Canaria Cabildo we're delighted to support the Semana Olímpica Canaria de Vela, which has become a well established event", said Lucas Bravo, who added that "the idea of the Gran Canaria Sail in Winter programme is fantastic for promoting the island abroad".

In addition to defining Real Club Náutico as a symbol of Gran Canaria, Bravo reiterated the support of the Cabildo and confirmed the ongoing collaboration of the public institution.

Technical data

Sailors from 23 countries have registered.

Races will be run in two race areas:

- The first will be for the Laser class races (Radial and Standard) and 2.4 mR (Paralympic sailing).
- In the second race area, the 470 class, catamarans (Nacra and F-18) and

RS:X (sail boards) will be competing.

The Olympic Week races will be held from 5 to 8 December, with three races a day starting at 11.00 hours.

(The press conference photo includes those already mentioned in the article, as well as Canary Islander Diego Quintana (fitness instructor for the Spanish Olympic sailing team), Canary Islands and Finnish Paralympic sailors, and Tamas Eszes, coach of the Hungarian team)

Translate from Spanish by Jane McGraph

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