

For Immediate Release

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## **Sailors with Disabilities Prepare For Success With Clagett Events**

NEWPORT, R.I. (March 28, 2007) – Sailors with disabilities who hope to represent the U.S.A. in China at the 2008 Paralympic Regatta will have an opportunity to improve their odds of doing so at this summer's C. Thomas Clagett Jr. Memorial Clinic and Regatta. Scheduled for August 26-30, 2007, and hosted by Sail Newport, Rhode Island's Public Sailing Center, this annual event – now in its fifth year – has fine-tuned all the elements to educate, test and strengthen competitors' abilities.

The event begins with a two-day clinic (August 26-27) that is open only to U.S. sailors. It will be led by five-time Rolex Yachtswoman of the Year Betsy Alison (Newport, R.I.), coach of the US Disabled Sailing Team. A highlight of the clinic will be a rules seminar conducted by sailing author and noted racing rules expert Dave Perry (Southport, Conn.).

The Clagett Regatta is open to both U.S. and foreign sailors with racing scheduled for August 28-30 in the three classes selected for competition at the 2008 Paralympic Regatta: the single-person 2.4 Metre, two-person SKUD-18, and the three-person Sonar. Competitors from Ireland and Israel have expressed interest in returning to the regatta and organizers expect up to eight nations may be represented on the starting line.

"Our goal in 2007 is to give our U.S. sailors with disabilities a venue to test themselves and discover whether they have what it takes to make it to the Paralympic Games," said event founder Judy McLennan (Newport, R.I.), daughter of the event's namesake. She explained that "The Clagett" is structured not only to give disabled sailors the information to improve their skills, but also the opportunity to test them in competition.

Strategically, The Clagett will also serve to better prepare those athletes who will compete in the year's two most important disabled sailing events – the IFDS (International Association for Disabled Sailing) World Championship and the U.S. Paralympic Team Trials-Sailing. The world championship (scheduled for September in Rochester, N.Y.) is the second of three championships where U.S. sailors can compete to qualify a berth to the 2008 Paralympic Games; the Trials will determine the actual sailors who represent the U.S.A. in those berths.

The 2007 Clagett Regatta is being planned to replicate, as closely as possible, the format of the

Trials which are scheduled for October 3-14, 2007, in Newport. It will serve as a warm up and performance test for competitors with Paralympic aspirations, and the same race management team will run both events.

The C. Thomas Clagett Jr. Memorial Clinic and Regatta honors the late Tom Clagett (1916-2001), a U.S. Navy World War II veteran who learned to sail on the Chesapeake Bay. As a youngster he suffered temporary paralysis as the result of a bout of meningitis; it was an experience that left him with a deep respect for the accomplishments of people with disabilities, especially athletes.

The Notice of Race and additional information on the clinic and regatta can be found online at [www.ussailing.net/Clagett/](http://www.ussailing.net/Clagett/)

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