LOOKING FORWARD

By Jonathan Rest, Senior Reporter

The Louis Vuitton America’s Cup World Series is the showcase for the greatest sailors in the world to race the fastest boats on stadium-style racecourses in front of live audiences of hundreds of thousands and broadcast globally to millions of fans across multiple platforms.

And from this year, there will be more opportunities than ever for host cities to get involved and reap the benefits.

Under a new framework agreement signed by five current America’s Cup national teams the Cup is to switch from quadrennial to a biennial schedule after the 2017 America’s Cup, providing long term stability to teams, sponsors, host cities and broadcasters.

The next America’s Cup World Series is intended to start in the fourth quarter of 2017, with up to 12 events to be staged in the lead up to the 36th America’s Cup in 2019 in a venue selected by the winner of this year’s competition.

With these points scoring ‘qualifiers’ likely to take place every other month, a drumbeat of interest will be created in America’s Cup racing between each Finals allowing host cities to be part of an exciting story.

New ground was broken in the last cycle, taking America’s Cup to Asia (Japan) and the Middle East (Oman) for the first time. Asia’s appetite for more America’s Cup events cannot be overstated, with Chinese audiences and stakeholders showing particular interest.

In addition, racing for the first time in America’s Cup history on fresh water, in Chicago 2016, proved another major success, with huge live attendance and TV numbers, opening up endless opportunities for land-locked nations to play their part in the story.

The picturesque backdrops offered by the Mediterranean, and the sporting appetite of Australia, U.S.A. and Latin America all fit the new-look America’s Cup.

It is not only geography in which the America’s Cup is expanding, it is also generating significant media coverage worldwide; Louis Vuitton America’s Cup World Series events in 2015-16, with its double Emmy Award winning media product, were broadcast in over 150 territories.

Millions of people can watch, read about, listen to and interact with the sport every single day and, as the sport itself and the teams that compete in it all embrace social media, fans can go right into the heart of the action whenever they want, wherever they are.

The America’s Cup is a unique proposition, with a heritage that is older than the modern Olympic Games. It is a great platform for host cities and brands to showcase the very best of what they have to offer and the return on investment that the America’s Cup provides is second-to-none.

“Throughout our analysis, it has been remarkable to see the commercial progress of the America’s Cup in recent years. The property drives significant value for its stakeholders and, with the framework agreement now locked in, that upwards trajectory is only likely to continue.”

Mike Laflin, CEO Sportcal
SAN FRANCISCO, USA
- Television Audience for 34th America’s Cup Match: 550 million
- Spectators: 2 million
- Emmy Awards: 2

BERMUDA
- Predicted Economic Impact for Bermuda: $250 million
- Super yachts attending 35th America’s Cup: 80

NEW YORK, USA
- Spectators: 200,000
- Television Viewership: 78 million
- Earned Media Impressions: 1.4 billion

CHICAGO, USA
- Spectators: 195,000 from 23 countries and 48 U.S. states
- Economic Impact: $41.6 million

PORTSMOUTH, UK
- Spectators: 133,000
- Earned Media Impressions: 3.5 billion
- Royal attendees: 2, HRH The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, William and Catherine

GOTHENBURG, SWEDEN
- Incredible competitive racing saw 3 separate teams winning the weekend’s four races.

MUSCAT, OMAN
- New Shores - first America’s Cup event in the Middle East
- Economic Impact: $26 million
- Accredited Media: 830 international media from 60 countries

TOULON, FRANCE
- Hospitality Guests: 2,000
- Spectators: 190,000

FUKUOKA, JAPAN
- New Shores - first America’s Cup event in Asia
- Local Sponsors: 28 including Google, Yahoo and Huawei

2015-2016 LOUIS VUITTON AMERICA’S CUP WORLD SERIES FINAL STANDINGS – POINTS

1. Land Rover BAR - 512
2. ORACLE TEAM USA - 493
3. Emirates Team New Zealand - 485
4. Artemis Racing - 466
5. Softbank Team Japan - 460
6. Groupama Team France - 419

Racing was hard fought and evenly matched during the entire series. Four teams were still in contention to claim the overall series title going into the last event in Fukuoka.

“The America’s Cup has entrusted us for the last 35 years to protect the cup and it’s probably the most valuable and the most desired trophy in the world.”

Michael Burke - CEO, Louis Vuitton
Almost 200,000 people flocked to a weekend of racing at the Navy Pier as the Windy City played host to the Louis Vuitton America’s Cup World Series.

Visitors came from 23 different countries and 48 different states across the USA, with a demographic ranging from locals watching their first sailing to aficionados from afar.

A quarter of visitors reported annual household income in excess of $200,000 and the event saw millions of dollars spent on thousands of hotel rooms and other local services.

The racing was spectacular in a “stadium” setting that is both iconic and accessible. It was the first time America’s Cup racing unfolded on a freshwater racecourse, and 2,000 spectator boats took to the water to watch.

‘The event’s positive impact for the community is undeniable, pumping millions of dollars into the local economy and, ultimately, establishing Chicago as a premier stadium sailing destination in North America.’

Tod Reynolds, Director Chicago Match Race Centre
America’s Cup racing came to Asian waters for the first time with this regatta in Japan. The event was arranged by the local sailing federation, the City of Fukuoka and SoftBank, who combined to organize the event. The dual strategic objectives were to promote competitive yacht racing in Japan - especially with the upcoming 2020 Olympic Games in Japan and its sailing programme in mind - and to promote the America’s Cup and Softbank Team Japan as part of that. Fukuoka, the 6th largest city in Japan with a population of 1.4 million, is also a host venue for the 2019 Rugby World Cup.

Hosting costs were far outweighed by the economic benefits, with thousands of external visitors (57% from outside Fukuoka), $12.3m of media visibility value and impressive sales of official merchandise: being $400,000 in two days. The local and national media embraced the event, with press conferences extremely well attended. The sailing community of Japan also praised the initiative. Top marine sponsor YANMAR - no stranger to working with leading brands, having a longstanding global partnership with Manchester United - was also delighted with its association with the first America’s Cup event in Japan. The legacy: an increased desire to stage future events.

“Fukuoka is aiming to be a leading city in Asia, so being able to host the Louis Vuitton America’s Cup World Series in Japan for the first time is truly wonderful”
Soichiro Takashima, Fukuoka City Mayor

“The event was an outstanding success. Our attendance numbers exceeded expectations with fans coming from all over Japan. Our television audience was impressive also – for a first ever America’s Cup event in Japan we saw incredibly high viewing figures and huge national and international interest.”
Taku Hashimoto, Event Director, Dentsu
**America’s Cup Effect on: New York, USA**

7-8 May 2016

America’s Cup racing returned to New York Harbour for the first time in nearly a century and huge crowds - and no small amount of big-name fans - flocked to soak up the action. Skiing superstar Lindsey Vonn took to the water aboard ORACLE TEAM USA during the event.

Hollywood heartthrob Liam Hemsworth was another A-lister keen to play a part in one of New York’s must-attend events of the year. The 26-year-old Australian star of the Hunger Games sailed in a practice run aboard Great Britain’s Land Rover BAR catamaran. CBS host and comedian Stephen Colbert was also in attendance, along with other well known faces from Virgin tycoon Richard Branson and American Pie movie star Jason Biggs.

The sport - the focal point on a weekend where glitz, glamour and high-level networking opportunities were abundant - could not have ended more dramatically. In a thrilling winner-takes-all final race, Emirates Team New Zealand unhooked itself from a starting buoy to win with a high score of 52 points. Mass media interest in the event included being featured on the front cover of the New Yorker.

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**Sportcal Insight**

The Louis Vuitton America’s Cup World Series event in New York City was a particular highlight in our already well-established calendar of sports events. We were pleased by the very positive outcome both from a media and client-hosting perspective and the sight of 200,000 fans of all ages gathering along the Manhattan shoreline during the weekend was extraordinary.

Klaus Hammerstingl, Head of Sport Marketing Strategy and International Sports, BMW Group

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<th>Attendance</th>
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**MERCHANDISE SALES**

$500,000

**HOSPITALITY GUESTS**

1,404

**HOURS OF BROADCASTING**

272 hours

**TELEVISION VIEWERSHIP**

78.4m viewers

**ACCREDITED MEDIA**

262

**ORGANISATIONAL BUDGET**

$4.5m

**ATTENDANCE**

200,000 (and 800 spectator boats on Hudson River)
TOULON, FRANCE

THE AMERICA’S CUP EFFECT ON...

Toulon’s aims in hosting a Louis Vuitton America’s Cup World Series event were fourfold - to strengthen the city’s reputation as a sailing destination; to showcase the excitement of ‘team’ sailing against ‘single-handed’ sailing, traditionally better appreciated in France; to promote the America’s Cup as an event; and specifically to kindle passion for the Groupama Team France challenge. All objectives were achieved via support and backing from the relevant authorities at city, departmental and regional level as well as the local chamber of commerce, the French Navy and Sports Ministry.

The event attracted 190,000 visitors, with around half coming from Toulon and the surrounding area but half from elsewhere in France (around 80,000) and abroad (16,000). Of the ‘outside’ visitors, 86 per cent came to Toulon specifically for the regatta, and 85 per cent of all ‘general’ visitors (those who might be classified as non-sailing experts) said they want to see another event and would come back to Toulon to do so. Hosting of 2,000 hospitality guests created multiple B2B opportunities. Staging of the event saw benefits both to the local economy, with $8m spent by visitors and sponsors alone.

“It was a great moment for sailing in France. The public really came out in force. The shore was packed with supporters, fans of sailing and those only just discovering the sport. They were revelling in what they saw and could almost touch given how close to shore the race zones were. We need more of the same!”

Bruno Dubois, Team Manager, Groupama Team France

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The event saw benefits both to the local economy, with $8m spent by visitors and sponsors alone.
Portsmouth hosted the second of its two Louis Vuitton America’s Cup World Series events in the 2015-16 cycle in summer 2016, a year after the first. The long-term vision of the organisers is to bring the America’s Cup back to Great Britain (as an event, and, literally, the trophy); and to engage and inspire young people into sailing. The shorter-term strategic objectives were to support the ‘home’ team of Land Rover BAR and help them to build profile, fanbase, awareness and sponsor value while bringing world-class racing to a UK audience, expanding interest. The event in 2016 attracted 133,000 spectators over three days and both events were attended by HRHs Prince William and the Duchess of Cambridge. Mass media coverage from national broadcasters and news outlets was achieved throughout the events.

Portsmouth was the only host venue to bid and then stage two events in the series cycle – a concept which proved highly advantageous. The 2015 event was marketed as a Great British Day Out - a festival of sailing and entertainment. The success of the 2015 event was built upon with the delivery of another world class sporting event in 2016. The 2016 event drew in the largest ever crowd for a sailing event in the United Kingdom, overtaking even the 2012 Summer Olympics, establishing Portsmouth as a highly successful venue to host an event of such magnitude while engaging the local community and wider public. The official charity of the event, 1851 Trust, has subsequently invested in a number of local legacy sailing programmes.
“The 35th America’s Cup will focus the world’s attention on the beautiful island of Bermuda. As host, the broadcast and media exposure that the oldest competition in international sport will generate is invaluable. There are also hugely positive financial and infrastructure development benefits to the island, with a particular boost to local and international business and to tourism.”

The Hon. Michael Dunkley, JP, MP, Premier of Bermuda

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Bermuda received its first taste of America’s Cup fever in the form of a vibrant and successful Louis Vuitton America’s Cup World Series event weekend in October 2015. The inaugural event was a hit with the teams and organizers, outperforming the original economic impact forecast by 406%, with the teams and media alone accounting for a visitor spend of $6.1m. The Cup returns in late-May of 2017 with the Louis Vuitton America’s Cup Qualifiers and the Louis Vuitton America’s Cup Challenger Playoffs, followed by the top Challenger facing the Defenders - ORACLE TEAM USA - in the 35th America’s Cup Match, presented by Louis Vuitton from 17-27 June, 2017.

The expectations for the climax of the greatest race on water are on another level entirely; with independent accountancy firms estimating a potential economic impact for the island in excess of $250m. There have been demonstrable legacy benefits already, with increased global interest in Bermuda as a tourist destination as well as inwards commercial investment and infrastructure developments. Bermuda has also been buoyed by news of its imminent hosting of additional major events (such as the ITU World Triathlon Series) and – not least – the fact that more than 80 super yachts and their owners and considerable crews are scheduled to make the trip to Bermuda to join the party for up to five weeks in May/June 2017. For Bermudians of all ages, this is “Our Cup, Our Moment” – and they certainly intend to make the most of it.
Sportcal Insight

The America’s Cup is the oldest trophy, and many believe the hardest to win, in international sport. And these latest plans will provide a catalyst to fuel the future commercial success and sporting stability of this prestigious event.

“People who want to enter this race now know how much it will cost, what kind of boat they need to build and that the rules can’t change on them. They are now able to plan ahead, build a boat, build a team and come out and compete for their country.”

Larry Ellison, Co-Founder of Oracle Corporation

The history stretches back to 1851, when the Cup was first contested. The technology has always been cutting edge. The racing has always been of supreme class. Now, in 2017, a momentous decision has been made to take the event into a brighter global future. One of the unique aspects of the competition is that after winning the racing on the water, the victorious yacht club and its team become the trustees of the event, responsible for outlining the terms of the next edition. Historically, this has seen a crescendo of interest in the America’s Cup as the final races take place, followed by an extended period of down-time during which the new ‘defender’ redefines the equipment and format of the next event. This defender builds a business structure to manage the next edition of a major, globalised, international competition, all while maintaining a core focus on winning as a sports technology and design challenge, providing stability and will give interested teams an opportunity to plan longer term. It establishes a modern sporting, technology and design challenge, within which costs are controlled to provide a much lower entry price, which will encourage more teams to be involved and ultimately create larger audiences and help incentivise more people to go sailing. As Iain Murray, Regatta Director of the upcoming 35th America’s Cup said: ‘There’s a void to be filled and the overwhelming message from all the people in the America’s Cup is let’s grab this opportunity and run with it.’

The New Framework Agreement in a Nutshell:
The framework agreement and agreed future protocol binds the signatories to deliver the 36th America’s Cup (AC36) and the 37th America’s Cup (AC37) under the following terms:
> The America’s Cup will be on a two-yearly cycle for AC36 (2019) and AC37 (2021).
> The America’s Cup World Series (ACWS) will start, at the election of the defender, as soon as Q4 2017. Venues, sponsors and media partners will be approached over the next six months to secure up to 12 international events over the next two years.
> The first year of the America’s Cup World Series (ACWS) will be raced in AC45foiling catamarans – the same boats used in America’s Cup World Series (ACWS) in the 35th America’s Cup.
> The second year will see a transition to the America’s Cup Class (ACC) boats, the same technically sophisticated class of boats raced in Bermuda in 2017 (with a slight rule modification to extend the wind range in which they can race to 4 to 26 knots). After this transition to the America’s Cup Class (ACC), the AC45s will be retired from the America’s Cup competition and the ACC boats will be the only boats raced.
> The America’s Cup World Series (ACWS) will culminate with a final event at the venue for the next America’s Cup and the final standings from the America’s Cup World Series (ACWS) will be used to qualify teams for the America’s Cup Challenger Playoffs.
> The America’s Cup Challenger Finals and America’s Cup Match will be held in 2019 in a venue selected by the winner of the 35th America’s Cup.
> To reduce costs, teams will not be permitted to build, test or train on AC45 surrogate boats as they have in this cycle of the America’s Cup. This above will repeat for AC37, with the exception that all racing will take place in America’s Cup Class (ACC) boats.
America’s Cup 2017

SPORT’S GREATEST COMEBACK

...IN THE GREATEST RACE ON EARTH

When the 35th America’s Cup gets underway in June on the Great Sound in Hamilton, Bermuda, it will have much to do to match the extraordinary unfolding of its predecessor event four years ago.

Make no mistake that the 2013 event went down in lore as one of the greatest sporting contests of any genre. The comeback that saw ORACLE TEAM USA prevail over Emirates Team New Zealand, from 1-8 down to a 9-8 triumph, stands up there among the most remarkable of all time.

“Imagine if these guys lost from here. What an upset that would be. They’ve almost got it in the bag, so that’s my motivation.”

ORACLE TEAM USA Skipper, Jimmy Spithill at a media press conference on 12th September, 2013 - trailing Emirates Team Zealand by 7 races.
The way in which the global media reported it at the time was testament to the extraordinary nature of such a comeback. The America’s Cup of 2013 is now routinely cited as the epitome of competitive spirit fully realised. This was sailing that transcended sport; sport that transcended the back pages. It was compelling, tense, dramatic and awash with human interest. It is what the America’s Cup is capable of offering, side by side with anything that the NFL’s Super Bowl, FIFA’s World Cup or myriad other world-watch events can offer.

Not least among the intrigue in this year’s America’s Cup is that Great Britain’s greatest Olympic sailor of all time, Sir Ben Ainslie, will be aiming to take the trophy with Land Rover BAR (Ben Ainslie Racing) from an ORACLE TEAM USA for whom his role as tactician in 2013 was pivotal in their incredible turnaround of fortunes four years ago.

To do justice to that win in full would take a book, never mind a few hundred words. Suffice to say the twist that arrived when the New Zealand yacht was leading 8-2 and on course for a 9-2 victory on Day 10, September 20th, was jaw-dropping.

From that moment on, it wasn’t meant to be for Emirates Team New Zealand. ORACLE TEAM USA secured their biggest margin of the regatta to that stage to pull back to 8-3 that very afternoon. By nightfall on September 22nd it was 8-5, a day later 8-6 and by the end of September 24th it was 8-8, and with a winner-take-all single race ahead.

Emirates Team New Zealand actually took the lead in the upwind third leg of the decider but ORACLE TEAM USA, carried by fate as well as the wind, overtook and sailed into history, 44 seconds clear in the end.

As an epic Wall Street Journal feature later recounted, a powerboat pulled up alongside the winning boat five minutes later. Aboard was Oracle founder, Larry Ellison. He climbed onto the yacht and said: ‘Do you guys know what you just did? You just won the America’s Cup!’

The America’s Cup has the capacity to deliver brilliance, epic narratives and the simplest stories of dreams broken, and realised, in a gust.

In 2013, NBC Sports said ORACLE TEAM USA’s victory ‘goes down as one of the most unfathomable comebacks of all time.’ The US broadcaster put the win at the head of a list of legendary and largely American sporting feats of the ages.

In 2013, The Daily Mail placed ORACLE TEAM USA’s victory as the greatest sporting comeback of all time, at No1 in a list that saw it surpass events including Europe’s ‘Miracle at Medinah’ in the 2012 Ryder Cup and Manchester United’s last-gasp 1999 Champions League final turnaround.

In 2013, ESPN cited a Major League Baseball comparison, saying the 2013 America’s Cup ‘was the equivalent of the Boston Red Sox sweeping the final four games of the 2004 AL Championship Series over the New York Yankees, the only 3-0 comeback in major league history.’

In 2014, Bleacher Report placed the 2013 America’s Cup alongside the biggest comebacks in the US and global sport, including famous NFL, NBA, NHL and college football feats.

In 2016, The Daily Telegraph placed it alongside the greatest comebacks in British sporting history, including England’s ‘Botham’s Ashes’ cricket Test win against Australia in 1981; Dennis Taylor’s snooker world championship final win in 1985; and Liverpool’s Champions League final win in 2005.


In 2017, Sky Sports sought to put the recent Super Bowl in context and placed ORACLE TEAM USA’s comeback alongside Muhammad Ali’s Rumble in the Jungle in 1974.