



Japan, Canada and the United Arab Emirates are converging on the historic town of Medemblik in the Netherlands for the 2019 Yanmar Dragon Gold Cup. Hosted by the Royal Netherlands Yacht Club and the Royal Yacht Club Hollandia, the regatta will take place from 9 to 14 June on the world-renowned sailing waters of the IJsselmeer.

The Dragon Gold Cup is one of the oldest and most prestigious trophies in one-design sailing and was first raced in 1937 off Oslo, where Rolf Bilner of Sweden was the inaugural winner. Held annually, the regatta features the perfect combination of top flight racing, fun social events and the genuine camaraderie for which the Dragon class is famous. This year's entry list brings together a well-balanced mix of professional and amateur teams, friends and family for a week-long celebration of all things Dragon.

The host Dutch fleet is putting forward a very strong team including Vendee Globe Race veteran Pieter Heerema, who currently lies second overall on the International Dragon Ranking List. Amongst the other top teams hoping for overall victory will be the current Ranking and European Cup Series leader Grant Gordon from Scotland, Russia's Anatoly Loginov and Dmitry Samolkin who are third and fourth respectively on the Ranking List, and Portugal's Pedro Rebelo de Andrade and Hugo Stenbeck of Switzerland who are tied for second overall in the European Cup Series.

America's Cup and World Match Racing veteran Peter Gilmour and his Japanese Yanmar Racing Team will travel from Australia in the hope of becoming the first Antipodean to add his name to the trophy. Gilmour's 2019 Dragon season has brought mixed fortunes so far, but despite this he is currently lying in fifth on the International Ranking and will surely be hoping for a consistent and incident free performance in Medemblik. Gilmour will also be representing event sponsor Yanmar during the week and looks forward to a great sponsor partnership; "Yanmar is one of the world's biggest diesel engine manufacturers and they love supporting the Dragon class. Their history extends back over 100 years and the Dragon is 90 years old this year, so there's a great synergy there. We have a terrific regatta planned and we can't wait to go racing."

Consistency is without doubt one of the most important factors in Gold Cup success. There are no discards in the six-race series, the courses are very large and challenging and the quality of competitors is quite extraordinary. A successful campaign must bring together great preparation of both the boat and the crew, detailed campaign planning, superb tactics, exceptional boat speed and just a little luck too.

Alongside the overall competition there are several additional trophies up for grabs. The Gold Cup Corinthian Trophy will be awarded to the top performing all amateur team. The Nations Cup is awarded to the winning three boat national team. The Borge Børresen Memorial Trophy will be awarded to the winner of the first race, and the Silver Cup will be presented to the boat that finishes exactly half way up the final rankings for the regatta.

The field of amateur teams vying for the Corinthian Gold Cup Trophy is particularly strong this year. The locally based Bakker family of father Jan and sons Dominic and Oliver, have high hopes of a good performance in this division, but the likes of Danish Olympic legend Poul Richard Hoj-Jensen, who may have celebrated his seventy-fifth birthday on 2 June but remains a formidable Dragon competitor, will certainly give them a good run for their money. Finland's Sami Saloma, who finished fourth in last year's Corinthian Gold Cup fleet, will also be hoping to make it onto the podium this year, as will Belgium's Xavier Vanneste.

Vanneste is one of a number of sailors who will be racing with family crews. Xavier sails with his sister Anne and their good friend Karl Odent. At least four teams will be entirely composed of family members, including Quirin, Frederique, Rosalie and Willemijn van Aspert from the Netherlands; Christian, Susanne, Kira-Karina and Marco Hentschel from Germany; Jacob,

Ewoud and Hugo Roosjn also from the Netherlands, and of course the famous Bakker boys. For others it's a case of family rivalry. Parents Philip and Nicola and sister Pia Dohse will be racing against son/brother Maximilian, who grew up crewing for his parents but now races his own Dragon to considerable success.

The ladies are well represented in the fleet too with Holland's Charlotte ten Wolde, Germany's Nicola Friesen, Finland's Sara Antila and Britain's Gavia Wilkinson-Cox all hoping for a top ten finish. Wilkinson-Cox summed up the appeal of the Dragon fleet well saying, "When I started competing internationally in the Dragon I was about the only lady helm and over the years I've been delighted to see that increase until the point where there are now a number of us on the circuit. To me the Dragon offers the ultimate form of sailing. We don't rely on instruments, its seat of the pants racing, and the competition is awesome."

Whilst for some the main goal is to go home with a trophy, for others attending the Yanmar Dragon Gold Cup is about the sheer joy of racing their beloved Dragons against likeminded sailors and enjoying the wonderful friendships which spring from association with the class. The après sailing programme is of equal importance as the on-water competition and this year the teams can look forward to some superb parties, including the Yanmar Gala Night, which will be held in the beautiful Bonifatius Church in the town centre. Also adding to the intimate feel of the regatta will be its location in the historic centre of Medemblik and the use of the town's famous Brakeboer Music Café as its social hub.

The regatta will get underway with a practice race on Saturday 8 June, with Championship racing from Sunday 9 to Friday 14 June. Six races are scheduled and up to two races may be sailed each day.

Daily reports, results and photographs will be available from [www.intdragon.com](http://www.intdragon.com) and journalists wishing to attend the regatta or receive additional information should contact IDA Press Officer Fiona Brown on [fiona.brown@fionabrown.com](mailto:fiona.brown@fionabrown.com), +44 (0)7711 718470 or Skype [fpbrown](#).

## About Yanmar

With beginnings in Osaka, Japan in 1912, Yanmar was the first ever to succeed in making a compact diesel engine of a practical size in 1933. Moving on, with industrial diesel engines as the cornerstone of the enterprise, Yanmar has continued to expand its product range, services, and expertise to deliver total solutions as an industrial equipment manufacturer. As a provider of small and large engines, agricultural machinery and facilities, construction equipment, energy systems, marine, machine tools, and components — Yanmar's global business operations span seven domains.

On land, at sea, and in the city, Yanmar's Mission of "providing sustainable solutions focused on the challenges customers face, in food production and harnessing power, thereby enriching people's lives for all our tomorrows," stands testament to Yanmar's determination to provide us with "A Sustainable Future".

For more details, please check out the official website of Yanmar Co. Ltd. : [www.yanmar.com/global/about/](http://www.yanmar.com/global/about/)

## About The International Dragon

The Dragon was designed by Johan Anker in 1929 as an entry for a competition run by the Royal Yacht Club of Gothenburg, to find a small keel-boat that could be used for simple weekend cruising among the islands and fjords of the Scandinavian seaboard. The original design had two berths and was ideally suited for cruising in his home waters of Norway. The boat quickly attracted owners and within ten years it had spread all over Europe.

The Dragon's long keel and elegant metre-boat lines remain unchanged, but today Dragons are constructed using the latest technology to make the boat durable and easy to maintain. GRP is the most popular material, but both new and old wooden boats regularly win major competitions while looking as beautiful as any craft afloat. Exotic materials are banned throughout the boat, and strict rules are applied to all areas of construction to avoid sacrificing value for a fractional increase in speed.

The key to the Dragon's enduring appeal lies in the careful development of its rig. Its well balanced sail plan makes boat handling easy for lightweights, while a controlled process of development has produced one of the most flexible and controllable rigs of any racing boat.

In 1937 the Gold Cup was presented to the class by the Clyde Yacht Clubs Association. This quickly became one of the principal championships in the class and a prestigious trophy in the world of competitive yachting.

For further information about the International Dragon and the 2019 Yanmar Dragon Gold Cup please contact Event Press Officer Fiona Brown on [fiona.brown@fionabrown.com](mailto:fiona.brown@fionabrown.com) or +44 (0)7711 718470 or visit [www.intdragon.net](http://www.intdragon.net)

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