

**FORTY TEAMS FROM TEN NATIONS ALREADY CONFIRMED FOR
2026 DRAGON EDINBURGH CUP AND UK GRAND PRIX IN AUGUST**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE





17 June 2026 - Cowes, UK - With six weeks still to go until the initial entry deadline at the end of July, some forty teams from ten nations including the UK, Austria, Belgium, Ireland, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the USA have already confirmed their intention to race in the 2026 Dragon Edinburgh Cup and UK Grand Prix.

The regatta, which combines the British Open Dragon Championship and leg three of the four regatta International Dragon Association (IDA) European Grand Prix Series, will be hosted by the Royal Yacht Squadron (RYS), Cowes, Isle of Wight from 16th to 21st August.

“2026 is a particularly auspicious year in Cowes, marking 200 years of Cowes Week, and with the Marblehead Trophy following in the footsteps of the Edinburgh Cup/UK Grand Prix, Dragon sailors are guaranteed a busy sailing/socialising couple of weeks! We are delighted that the Royal Yacht Squadron, under the baton of our experienced race officer, Rob Brown, is once again organising our racing. The history of the Edinburgh Cup is deeply rooted in Cowes, as it was here that the trophy began and was first raced for nearly 80 years ago. We are working hard to ensure we deliver the very best Edinburgh Cup/UK Grand Prix and look forward to welcoming our British Dragon sailors to their National Championship and all our international Dragon sailing friends to Cowes in August.” - Event Director Gavia Wilkinson-Cox

Racing for the two regattas will take place concurrently on windward leeward courses in the central Solent, and championship racing will run from Tuesday 18 to Friday 21 August, with four races required to constitute a series and a single discard being introduced once five races have been completed. Race Officer Rob Brown, himself a Dragon sailor of many years standing and indeed an Edinburgh Cup winner, will head up the RYS race committee and brings a wealth of experience to the role.

Speaking on behalf of the RYS, Rob Brown commented; *“The Royal Yacht Squadron is once more honoured and delighted to be hosting this prestigious event, combining the Edinburgh Cup and Grade 1 Grand Prix. From a personal perspective, I have a long association with the Dragon Class as a competitor and latterly Race Officer for four recent Edinburgh Cups, including the 2023 Grand Prix. I was fortunate to be a Vakaros observer at the recent Sanremo Grand Prix. The RYS race team is well prepared and excited to deliver a Vakaros equipped series. Recent experience has convinced me personally of the huge advance it has made to race management, particularly in large fleets.”*

With an elite fleet of international sailors to manage, the race committee will use the Vakaros Racesense start line management system. This automated digital race management system utilises real time differential GNSS to provide both the competitors and the committee with live start line detection and race tracking, so the sailors and Race Officer knows exactly where the boats are in relation to the start line, and spectators can follow all the action live from the comfort of their armchairs.

The international visitors competing include top Swiss sailor Jan Eckert who headed the 2025 International Dragon Rankings, Sweden’s Jan Secher who took bronze medal at the 2026 Swedish Grand Prix; Germany’s Christoph Toepfer who was

second in last year's IDA rankings and won both the 2025 Italian Grand Prix and German Nationals; Xavier Vanneste from Belgium who took third place at the 2026 Hungarian Grand Prix, and William Swigart of the USA who is the defending Corinthian (all amateur) Edinburgh Cup Champion. There will also be a strong contingent coming from Ireland, headed up by past Edinburgh Cup winner Martin Byrne.

There's an equally strong British contingent determined to keep the cup in the UK led by reigning and four-time Dragon World Champion Andy Beadsworth. Other top Brits to look out for include Grant Gordon and the Louise Racing Team who come fresh from victory at the 2026 Dragon Gold Cup in Mallorca, Ivan Bradbury who won the opening Grand Prix of the season in San Remo, Graham Bailey sailing the legendary Bluebottle who has just won the Finnish National Championship.

There is already a record entry for the Seagull Trophy, which is presented to the highest place female helm in the Edinburgh Cup. Those already confirmed to be competing include Ireland's Nicola Halloran, England's Gavia Wilkinson-Cox who is consistently one of the top performing female helms on the international circuit, Germany's Laura Schewe and Magdalena Gründt, Scotland's Cathy Ogden and Switzerland's Christiane Hügelmann.

2026 sees the British Dragon Association (BDA) celebrate its 70th Anniversary and to mark the occasion there will be an IDA 70th Anniversary Celebration Race on the afternoon of Monday 17th August, which will also act as the practice race for the main regatta. The prize giving for this race will take place at the 2026 Edinburgh Cup/UK Dragon Grand Prix Opening Ceremony which takes place at the Royal Yacht Squadron that evening. Racing for the Edinburgh Cup and UK Dragon Grand Prix will run from Tuesday 18th to Friday 21st August, with the regatta culminating in a Gala Prize Giving Dinner at the RYS.

For those travelling to Cowes from mainland UK and overseas a special discounted Solent ferry crossing is available via the BDA's special arrangement with Red Funnel on their Southampton to East Cowes route. Launching, recovery and marina berthing will be provided by event partner Cowes Yacht Haven, which is also home base for the local Cowes Fleet. North Sails will support the event with an overnight sail repair service while Dragon race preparation specialist Katie Cole will be on site to handle any boat repairs.

For Katie Cole commitment to the Dragon Class is lifelong. "I've sailed Dragons all my life and worked with the class for some three decades, so I'm thrilled to be able to support the Edinburgh Cup and UK Dragon Grand Prix again this year. With a super strong international fleet racing, and the added fun of the British Dragon Association's 70th Anniversary celebrations it really is going to be a fantastic event. Alongside my professional support with boat repairs, I am also delighted to be sponsoring one of the Après Sailing drinks parties - after all, sundowners on the Royal Yacht Squadron lawn are the perfect way to end a great day's racing."

Further information about the Edinburgh Cup can be found at britishdragons.org or by contacting:

Gavia Wilkinson-Cox
Edinburgh Cup 2026 Event Director
T - +44 7973 165888
E - gavia@wilkinson-cox.co.uk

Fiona Brown
Edinburgh Cup 2026 Press Officer
T +44 7711 718470
E fiona.brown@fionabrown.com





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.

The British Dragon Association celebrates it's 70th Anniversary in 2026. The Edinburgh Cup was presented to the class by the last Duke of Edinburgh and was first raced for in 1949 in Cowes. It is awarded annually to the winner of the British Open Dragon Championship.

For further information about the International Dragon visit www.intdragon.net

FOLLOW US

