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OFFICIAL MEDIA RELEASE

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35th Annual Sarasota Powerboat Grand Prix Festival (June 29-July 7)

As Sarasota prepares to celebrate 35 years of racing history on July 7, race fans can expect to see more teams compete and take advantage of an expanded viewing area on Lido Beach. Two leading race sanctioning organizations, the Offshore Powerboat Association (OPA) and Powerboat P1, have formed a partnership as joint promoters of a new race series to deliver outstanding race action and entertainment. Sarasota is one of six race sites for the 2019 Offshore Powerboat Association Offshore Championship Series.

Over 50 race teams are expected to compete in Sarasota with competitors from Italy, Canada, New Zealand, UAE – Dubai, Turkey, United Kingdom, Wales, Trinidad, Australia, and Norway. With the increased amount of boats expected, the race course has been expanded to 6.17 miles from last year’s 4.9 miles, extending just North of New Pass down to the Sandcastle Resort. CBS Sports and Fox Sports will feature a one-hour post-race program of the race. CBS will air on Sunday, August 4, at 3 pm EST. Fox Sports has not yet announced their air date, however, they have confirmed that the show will air sometime in August. The combined geographic reach of both shows will be to an estimated 65 Million households in the United States and into 400 Million households in over 150 countries. A live stream of the race will be shown on: [facebook.com/powerboatp1wc](https://www.facebook.com/powerboatp1wc)

According to Research Data Services out of Tampa, last year’s Festival generated an economic impact of \$21.9 Million and 14,800 room nights. Director of Sports for Visit Sarasota County, Shelby Connett, commented “Sports tourism plays a major role in our local economy and this Festival continues to be one of our biggest sporting events. With national televised coverage on CBS Sports and Fox Sports Florida this is good news for our economy and great exposure for Sarasota.” Powerboat P1 CEO, Azam Rangoonwala, and OPA President, Roland Smith shared their goal - “We want to stage events that excite and entertain, ensuring enjoyment for spectators and TV audiences with great sponsor value and a real economic impact for host venues.”

Suncoast Charities for Children continues to be the driving force behind all the events associated with the Festival and is the only race site run entirely by a local non-profit charity. The Grand Prix has a very meaningful history, having been initially created as a fundraiser for charity. “With all the fun and excitement surrounding the Sarasota Powerboat Grand Prix Festival it is sometimes easy to lose sight of this and many times the general public is not aware of this aspect. Sponsorships and donations are critical to sustain the event. Every year we hope to ensure that a significant amount of net proceeds are generated to continue to fulfill our mission of supporting five local non-profit agencies which provide programs and services every year to over 5,000 local children, teens, and adults with special needs. Festival events such as the downtown block party, July 4th bayfront fireworks, and the Grand Prix Race remain free of charge to the public. Donations of any amount are very important and always welcome,” stated Suncoast Charities for Children’s Executive Director, Lucy Nicandri.

Festival events include a golf classic, boat and personal watercraft fun run, kickoff party, “Boats On The Block” Downtown Block Party, a meet and greet with race teams, car & motorcycle show and, of course, the July 4th Bayfront Fireworks. The Grand Prix race takes place between 10am and 3pm on Sunday, July 7, off Lido Beach. Limited VIP race day tickets are available on the Festival’s website.

Presenting sponsors for the Sarasota Powerboat Grand Prix Festival include Visit Sarasota and Sarasota County. Major sponsors include Budweiser, City of Sarasota, Ocean Properties, FCCI Insurance, Hyatt Regency Sarasota, Crescent Club and Pope Golf. To purchase race day tickets, make a donation, or to learn more visit: sarasotapowerboatgrandprix.org
 For event updates to your mobile device text **powerboats** to **941-229-7774**.

2019 APBA Offshore Championship Race Calendar

May 17-19	Cocoa Beach, FL
May 31-June 2	Lake of the Ozarks, MO
July 5-7	Sarasota, FL
July 26-28	St. Clair, MI
August 2-4	Michigan City, IN
Oct. 10-12	Fort Myers Beach, FL

