



## Sponsor backs Ainslie for 2012 Olympics

At a time when sponsorship is hard to come by – witness Cowes Week – investment specialists J.P. Morgan Asset Management appear to be going all out to capitalise on the London 2012 Olympic Games through triple Gold and Silver medallist Ben Ainslie (above) and their continued support of the Round the Island Race, the fourth largest participation event in the UK.

At a slick breakfast meeting on day one of the London Boat Show, Jasper Berens confirmed sponsorship through to 2012. He emphasised the attraction in the sport of sailing of challenge, teamwork, determination and the will to win, all attributes his company aimed to mirror, he said.

In Ainslie, who is not only a top Olympic prospect in the Finn and heavily involved with Sir Keith Mills's Origin America's Cup team, but also an increasingly polished performer in his public relations roles, J.P. Morgan couldn't have chosen better.



## Najad back on track

The future of the Swedish boatbuilders Najad looks a lot steadier after the UK firm Animatrix Capital LLP become the majority shareholder in November last year. The new management, headed by Per Lindquist (above), intends to return Najad to their roots, building luxury boats in carefully controlled, rather than volume production, scaling production down to 60-70 boats a year with a smaller workforce. [www.najad.com](http://www.najad.com)

# Sam is Yachtsman of the Year

Sam Davies was the popular winner of the 2009 YJA Pantaenius Yachtsman of the Year Award, which was presented by Sir Robin Knox-Johnston at a ceremony at Trinity House during the Tullet Prebon London International Boat Show at ExCeL.

Davies, sailing her IMOCA 60 *Roxy*, not only came 3rd in the Vendée Globe 2008/9, which with just 19 finishers out of 30 had become a demolition derby, but later in the year went on to break the Round Britain and Ireland record with an all-female crew. She was 2nd in class in the IMOCA 60 *Artemis* in the Rolex Fastnet Race and then completed the Transat Jacques Vabre, finishing 10th.

Davies, a Cambridge Masters graduate in mechanical and electrical engineering, is respected by her fellow sailors for her skill and knowledge, topped off with an ability to communicate her experiences entertainingly even when the going gets tough.

## Youth row over Perham

Meanwhile, 420 sailors Phil Sparks and Ben Gratton won the YJA Pantaenius Young Sailor of the Year Award after taking Gold at the Volvo Youth Sailing ISAF World Championships in Brazil last July, the first British boys ever to win a 420 ISAF world title. They also won their class in Kiel Week and came 3rd in the 420 Worlds on Lake Garda.

There was some controversy over the decision by the YJA shortlisting committee not to put forward round the world sailor Mike Perham as a candidate for young yachtsman.

June Hamilton, chairman of the YJA, said: "The process was rigorous and the decision not to include him on the shortlist was unanimous. We are not in the business of snubbing people. We don't want to be seen to be promoting or encouraging something that is potentially dangerous and that could backfire on the YJA."

She also pointed out that because the 17-year-old Perham didn't sail round the three Capes and instead passed through the Panama Canal, his was not a conventional circumnavigation, adding that he neither broke nor established an official World Sailing Speed Record Council record.

The Yachting Journalists Association (YJA) also made special awards to Rod Carr, the retiring chief executive of the RYA, and to Lloyd Hamilton, whose *Toe* in the Water organisation has helped in the rehabilitation of many wounded servicemen and women.

Above: Sam Davies displays her trophy and (right) Rod Carr is presented with a special award by Sir Robin Knox-Johnston



Perham (above) missed out, but 420 sailors Phil Sparks (centre) and Ben Gratton take the Young Sailor trophy, presented by Ben Ainslie (left)

