

## **PRESS RELEASE JULY – GUL Fireball World Championships at Lough Derg Yacht Club, Dromineer, Co Tipperary, Ireland.**

Sponsors come aboard as entries surge for GUL Fireball Worlds 2022 at Lough Derg YC

A surge in entries before the main closing date for the GUL Fireball Worlds at LDYC Dromineer on Thursday saw entries reach 75 boats. Earlier in the week additional sponsors GUL and Failte Ireland came on board, joining Carrickcraft and Tipperary Co Council as key supporters of the event in August. The watersports apparel company GUL becomes the title sponsor of the Worlds, now known as the GUL Fireball World Championship 2022. The event has additional support from Irish Sailing and Fireball International. As this is the first Fireball World Championship since Montreal in 2019 there is significant interest around the globe with teams entered from Australia, Canada, France, Switzerland, Italy, the Czech Republic and South Africa, along with a large contingent from the UK and a rapidly growing local fleet. Many teams are travelling with their families and extending their trip so the event is expected to provide a strong boost to tourism in the lakelands area and beyond. The stunning lakelands area, a lesser-known gem of the Irish tourism offering, is likely to surprise domestic and international sailors alike with its beauty. With special Irish Ferries rates for competitors the 'Trip to Tipp', is an attractive option for sailors from mainland Europe and the UK. Another great attraction at LDYC is the amount of space available for camping and for camper vans so much of the Worlds fleet is expected to live on-site for the event helping to keep the event both affordable and extremely social. With Carrickcraft cruiser hire as one of the sponsors discounted cruiser hire is available to competitors and their families, providing an attractive accommodation alternative which would allow families to view the racing from their floating holiday homes based on the marina beside the sailing club.

In preparation for the Worlds the International trophies have been shipped to Ireland. Of these the most impressive is the World Championship trophy, a genuine work of art dating back to 1966 and featuring the famous sailor and journalist Bob Fisher as the first winner. Other famous names include John Caig, Ian Pinnell, Lawrie Smith, and of course the only Irish winners John Lavery and David O'Brien in 1995. The class celebrates its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year with the major events being the Lough Derg

Worlds and the special anniversary event at Hayling Island UK last weekend.

International race officer Con Murphy will be PRO for the event. The World Championships take place from August 21<sup>st</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> with a warm-up event on 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> August which doubles as the Irish National Championship. Measurement checking is expected to take place mainly on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> August with the racing programme of two races per day running from Sunday through Friday with Wednesday as the lay day. With some fifty square miles of open lake the venue is likely to challenge sailors with a good mixture of conditions over the week. While not at all as shifty or light as smaller lakes it will be interesting to see if the venue suits the Swiss and Czech competitors who predominantly sail on lakes. Amongst a hot entry list are multiple World champion Tom Gillard (UK) and former Fireball World champion Ruedi Moser (SUI). There are several top Irish teams participating including Barry McCartin and crew Conor Kinsella, Noel Butler and Stephen Oram, and also several new teams who have joined the fleet in recent months and have shown real potential. Not least of these is Chris Bateman who won the recent Fireball Ulsters in very lively and hotly contested conditions and has teamed up with professional dinghy coach Thomas Chaix for the Worlds.

The event will include an activity programme for families and non-sailors with many and diverse regional attractions. The long lead-up to the event, with the delay caused by the pandemic, has given the domestic Fireball fleet a great boost and the last couple of years have seen a big increase in local numbers. Some 28 Irish boats have now committed to the event, the first Fireball Worlds on local waters in eleven years. Youth sailors are welcome and can enter at a discount of 20% and the class is encouraging sailors from other classes to get hold of a Fireball and to join the fray. Recent months have seen a huge increase in interest in Fireballs in Ireland and sailors have joined from the 420s, GP14s, 49ers amongst other classes. Latecomers are advised to enter now via the club website at [ldyc.ie](http://ldyc.ie) before the event finally closes to late entrants on Friday August 13<sup>th</sup>.

Issued on behalf of the Irish Fireball Association and LDYC

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