

From 19 to 24 September 2023

## Record participation in the Défi Azimut - Lorient Agglomération

### To note in this press release:

- Over 35 IMOCA sailboats expected to compete in the 13th edition of the Défi Azimut - Lorient Agglomération
- Menu: speed runs, offshore race, Tour de l'île de Groix round island race
- The event is asserting itself as a showcase for excellence across a region and an ecosystem geared towards high-tech boating

**Unprecedented! The next edition of the Défi Azimut - Lorient Agglomération promises to be historic with more than 35 boats signed up to compete. At the heart of Lorient La Base in Brittany, the offshore racing elite is coming together from 19 to 24 September to enjoy a sensational programme of speed runs, a long offshore race and a Tour de l'île de Groix round island race. Benefiting from a slot just over a year before the Vendée Globe, the IMOCA line-up will have never been so sumptuous with a third of the new boats set to compete, helmed by the world's top sailors. Samantha Davies, Yannick Bestaven, Thomas Ruyant, Clarisse Crémer, Jérémie Beyou, Franck Cammas, as well as Charlie Dalin – winner of the last edition – rank among the choice offering of skippers.**

### The secrets to growing success

*“The growing success encountered since the debut edition that grouped together some 5 boats back in 2011, hinges on the founding partnership with the Class IMOCA. It is fuelled by a shared passion for innovation and experimentation, which makes up our core business of creating digital solutions,”* explains Jean-Marie Corteville, President of Azimut, the organiser and founder of this atypical event. *“It is also based on bringing communities into the mix. Alongside them, our aim continues to revolve around consolidating and developing the event so that the annual experience of offering a unique multi-format approach forms part of a lasting and powerful barometer on a national and international scale.”*

*“From the beginning, all the ingredients have been in place to create a wonderful event, starting with an excellent mindset,”* explains Antoine Mermod, President of

Class IMOCA. *“It’s one of the main reasons why the teams and all the people around them take great pleasure in coming to spend the week in Lorient. This meeting has been built up over many years to come up with an incredibly interesting format, combining the highest level of competition and some specially tailored hospitality programmes for both sponsors and guests.”*

Ranking among these programmes, the Azimut Bretagne speed runs now have their own special slot that serves as an opener to every edition. According to tradition, this year’s vintage will kick off on Wednesday 20 September with a series of speed runs along a short mile or so course in reaching conditions. With the rocky shallows of the Courreaux de Groix transformed into a nautical arena, the skippers, co-skippers and crew members will each take turns to set sail on a race against the clock in a bid to show off the true potential of their machines. For the third consecutive year, the Surlo tracking app, developed from Azimut technology, will make it possible to follow all the latest action in this nautical jousting, live via smartphone.

### **Speed runs, sport, fun, and plenty more besides...**

Next up on the Défi Azimut - Lorient Agglomération programme will be an offshore race designed as a proper warm-up to the high point of the IMOCA season, The Transat Jacques Vabre 2023. *“In September, the opposing armies set themselves the goal of being ready for this meeting in Lorient, which is the final straight prior to the main event of the autumn,”* adds the boss of Class IMOCA. Just a few weeks beforehand that, this year’s 48h Azimut (from Thursday 21 to Saturday 23 September) will be contested in double-handed format. The ranking from this course, with its 500-600 miles included in the quest to qualify for the next Vendée Globe, also counts towards the points tally for the IMOCA Globe Series championship. True to form, the flagship event for the challenge will offer the duos of sailors, together with an on-board reporter, a looped circuit around the Atlantic to test and hone their performance on every point of sail.

This format really appeals to Charlie Dalin, winner of the last two editions, who will this year be competing on a new boat. *“It’s the perfect event for analysing and comparing the performance of the boats and the pairings in all types of configurations, especially in the long race where strategy and average speed will be a key focus.”* The skipper of MACIF Santé Prévoyance, which has only just hit the water, makes no secret of how keen he is to get out sailing: *“It will be a quality line-up. I’m eager to size up the competition aboard my brand-new boat. It’s sure to be very instructive!”*

Finally, this meeting in Lorient will conclude with the Tour de Groix Azimut (Sunday

24 September), which offers both sailors and partners the opportunity to combine competition and conviviality as they sail around one of the most beautiful islands along this section of coast. Indeed, this 'three in one' event provides a unique platform to invite the general public to discover these oceanic steeds, gathered together dockside, under the watchful eye of the teams from the port of Lorient La Base.

This Défi Azimut - Lorient Agglomération 2023, the only sports event of this calibre initiated by a digital company, also boasts a shoreside programme on a par with the competition. Indeed, at the Cité de la Voile-Éric Tabarly, there are free conferences open to all upon registration, the content of which is drawn up in partnership with the Class IMOCA, Eurolarge BDI, Audélor and UBS, and gives rise to some stellar round tables. These exchanges help to further the whole of the nautical ecosystem, in an area that has made offshore racing the driving force of its development and its influence.

## THE PARTNERS HAVE THEIR SAY

*“Today, Lorient La Base is the nerve centre of global offshore racing. An entire ecosystem has been formed there, grouping together all the protagonists making up the area’s various technological networks, especially those involved in the ‘Lorient Composite Valley’, naval architecture and the production of race boats, their deck hardware and their on-board electronic equipment. This thirteenth edition of the Défi Azimut – Lorient Agglomération is shaping up to be a record edition, shining a spotlight on all the dynamism of our offshore racing hub.”*

Fabrice Loher,  
President of Lorient Agglomération and Mayor of Lorient

-----

*“The Morbihan benefits from some incomparable natural assets for the practice of water sports activities and sailing. As such, the Department is delighted to see this special setting, with its exceptional stretches of water, its thriving marine industry and its port infrastructure, being shown to advantage thanks to the hosting of major events here like the Défi Azimut – Lorient Agglomération.*

*Since 2011, this mid-September meet has been a golden ticket for offshore sailing and adventure. Created by enthusiasts, it has managed to adapt to the developing offshore racing scene and become one of today’s go-to professional sailing meets.*

*A leading sports event, it is also an economic gathering, which manages to forge links and create synergies between the protagonists involved in an increasingly dynamic marine network.”*

David Lappartient  
President of the Council of the Morbihan Department

-----

*“What a pleasure it is to be a new partner to the Défi Azimut - Lorient Agglomération! If, over the years, Brittany has risen up through the ranks of the sportiest regions in France, it is largely due to its ability to embrace major nautical events and their participants.*

*Like Brittany itself, offshore racing is characterised by a passion for effort and excellence. Commitment, boldness and solidarity are further examples of the strong values that Brittany shares with these top-level athletes, who give visibility to the exceptional vitality of the Bretagne Sailing Valley®, which is a particularly dynamic and innovative economic sector.”*

Loïg Chesnais-Girard  
President of the Région Bretagne

-----

## THE ENTRIES

- Biotherm (Paul Meilhat / NC)
- Charal (Jérémy Beyou / Franck Cammas)
- Corum L'Épargne (Nicolas Troussel / Benjamin Schwartz)
- Coup de Pouce – Giffard Manutention (Manu Cousin / Clément Giraud)
- D'Ieteren Group (Denis Van Weynbergh / Erwann Le Mene)
- DMG Mori Global One (Kojiro Shiraishi / Benoit Mariette)
- Fives Group - Lantana Environnement (Louis Duc / Remi Aubrun)
- FOR PEOPLE (Thomas Ruyant / Morgan Lagravière)
- For the Planet (Sam Goodchild / Antoine Koch)
- Fortinet - Best Western (Romain Attanasio / NC)
- Foussier - Mon courtier Energie (Sébastien Marsset / Sophie Faguet)
- Freelance.com (Guirec Soudée / Roland Jourdain)
- Gentoo Sailing Team (James Harayda / Stéphane Le Diraison)
- Groupe Apicil (Damien Seguin / Laurent Bourgues)
- Hublot (Alan Roura / Simon Koster)
- Human (Antoine Cornic / Jean-Charles Luro)
- Imagine (Conrad Colman / NC)
- Initiatives Coeur (Sam Davies / Nicolas Lunven)
- La Mie Câline (Arnaud Boissières / Gérald Vénier)
- Lazare (Tanguy Le Turquais / Felix de Nacelle)
- L'Occitane en Provence (Clarisse Cremer / NC)
- MACIF (Charlie Dalin / Pascal Bidégorry)
- MACSF (Isabelle Joschke / Pierre Brasseur)
- Maître Coq V (Yannick Bestaven / Julien Pulvé)
- Monnoyeur - Duo for a job (Benjamin Ferré / Pierre Le Roy)
- Nexans - Arts & Fenêtres (Fabrice Amedeo / NC)
- Oliver Heer Ocean Racing? (Oliver Heer / Nils Palmieri)
- Paprec Arkéa (Yoann Richomme / Yann Eliès)
- Team Holcim - PRB (NC / NC)
- Prysmian Group (Giancarlo Pedote / NC)

- STAND AS ONE (Eric Bellion / Martin Le Pape)
- Szabi Ocean Racing (Szabolcs Weöres / NC)
- Teamwork (Justine Mettraux / Julien Villion)
- V AND B - MONBANA – MAYENNE (Maxime Sorel / Christopher Pratt)

## THE PROGRAMME

### **Monday 18 September 2023**

COMPULSORY PRESENCE OF THE COMPETITORS

### **Tuesday 19 September 2023**

OFFICIAL OPENING AND SOIREE

14:00 – 17:00hrs: "Societal engagement" workshops

19:00hrs: Opening ceremony (upon invitation)

### **Wednesday 20 September 2023**

RUNS AZIMUT – BRETAGNE TIMED SPRINTS IN CREWED FORMAT

12:00hrs: Competitors dock out

13:00hrs: Launch of the speed runs

20:30hrs: Speed run prize-giving

### **Thursday 21 September 2023**

48H DOUBLE-HANDED AZIMUT

14:00hrs: IMOCA's dock out

15:30hrs: Start of the 48H Azimut

### **Friday 22 September 2023**

(invitation only)

WORKSHOPS - AUDELOR - EUROLARGE

### **Saturday 23 September 2023**

RETURN OF THE 48H RACE & CREW SOIREE

12:00 – 18:00hrs: Arrival of the boats

**Sunday 24 September 2023**

TOUR DE GROIX AZIMUT & PRIZE-GIVING

11:00hrs: IMOCA fleet dock out 12:00hrs:

Start of Tour de l'Île de Groix

17:00hrs: Défi Azimut - Lorient Agglomération prize-giving