



YJA Pantaenius Young Sailor of the Year Award 2009

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Phil Sparks and Ben Gratton are presented with the YJA Pantaenius Young Sailor of the Year Award 2009 by Ben Ainslie
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Regional Young Sailor of the Year winners with Ben Ainslie

Ben Ainslie presents inspirational young sailors with YJA Pantaenius Young Sailor of the Year award

Phil Sparks from Mudeford and Ben Gratton from Guildford were presented with the prestigious YJA Pantaenius Young Sailor of the Year Award 2009 at the Tullet Prebon London International Boat Show on Saturday 9th January 2010. The award was presented by sailing legend Ben Ainslie CBE, a previous winner himself.

Phil and Ben were voted RYA Southern Regional Young Sailors of the Year 2009 last autumn. They won Gold in their 420 on the final day of the 2009 Volvo Youth Sailing ISAF World Championships in Brazil. They also won first place in the Kiel Week regatta and fifth place in the 420 Class Worlds at Lake Garda.

Phil and Ben were amongst thirteen RYA Regional Young Sailor of the Year winners who are voted for by RYA affiliated sailing clubs. These young sailors have made a significant impact on youth sailing, ranging from gold medal winning achievements and overcoming adversity, to the huge amount of hard work and effort they give back to their clubs.

Ben Ainslie also presented awards to the RYA Regional Winners:

Eastern:	Aaron Lowther and Steve Curtis
East Midlands:	Alice Kent and Lucy Childs
Northern Ireland:	Chris Eames
North East:	Gary Rutherford
Scotland:	Callum Airlie
South East:	Thomas Lambert
South West:	Isobel Hamilton
Thames Valley:	Sophie Hamilton
Wales:	Hannah Tilley
West Midlands:	Andrew Bridgman
Yorkshire and Humberside:	Emma Labourne
North West:	Adam Purcell

YJA Pantaenius Young Sailor of the Year award was first presented in 1993. Early winners include Dame Ellen MacArthur and Ben Ainslie CBE, who both went on to win the Yachtsman of the Year title.

In addition to votes from members of the public for the YJA Pantaenius Young Sailor of the Year, over 1,700 RYA affiliated clubs have the opportunity to nominate. Plus, the RYA puts forward winners from each of its 13 regions as nominations for the YJA Pantaenius Young Sailor of the Year.

YJA Pantaenius Young Sailor of the Year receives a trophy and goodies provided by Azure Wear UK, Yacht Parts Plymouth and Allspars.

The 2009 YJA Pantaenius Yachtsman of the Year will be announced on Tuesday 12th January, at an awards ceremony to be held at Trinity House, London.

Finalists for this prestigious title are Paul Goodison, World Laser champion, Olympic Gold medal and five times European champion. Paul is the only sailor worldwide to hold all three awards at the same time and was nominated for the ISAF Rolex World Sailor of the Year Award. Sam Davies, first placed Briton in the Vendee Globe 2008/09. Sam competed in the Transat Jacques Vabre race which finished last 2009 and was also nominated for the ISAF Rolex World Sailor of the Year Award. Finally, Ian Williams. two times World Match Race champion. Ian became the first British National to be crowned Match Racing World champion in the event's 19 year history.

The award will be presented by Sir Robin Knox-Johnston a previous winner himself.