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## TONGAS' CHALLENGE FOR THE 2014 AMERICAS CUP

The Kingdom of Tonga, a small group of islands in the heart of the Pacific, has an audacious plan to challenge for the 34<sup>th</sup> Americas Cup. Mark Belvedere from Tonga's America's cup challenge says;

"Tonga has the oldest sailing culture in the world. It is only fitting that we challenge for the oldest yacht race in the world."

The hopes of the Challenge team rest solely on the race rules. For Tonga to enter, a multihull format must be selected and one which allows for multiple countries to challenge on a reasonable budget.

"We plan to use a traditional Polynesian style multi-hull, built with advanced materials and a high tech canting sail" and mark would know. He attempted a world speed record in the Ha'apai islands of Tonga using a prototype design in 2004. He is also responsible for developing equipment used in many world speed records.

The bid is also expected to revitalise ancient sailing techniques that Tongans used to travel the South Pacific for hundreds if not thousands of years.

"Until the mid nineteenth century European vessels were limited to being pushed by the wind where the Tongans used multihull vessels to establish trade over 1/5 of the earth's surface – by sailing their boats with speed and accuracy against trade winds without charts or compasses. We want to take these ancient skills and traditional designs and with some 21<sup>st</sup> century materials present a competitive boat to the world."

The essence of the Deed of Gift is about pitting a countries people and technology against the best in the world. A pure monohull race would prevent the oldest sailing nation from taking part – let's hope that the Larry Ellison and the committee recognise this during their deliberations on the design rule.

Approved By:

  
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