



News release

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Advancing women in sailing – PwC hosts panel discussion with top female sailors

HAMILTON, Bermuda – Men have a key role to play in empowering women and creating opportunities for them to gain experience and advance in the male dominated sport of sailing, top international sailors Abby Ehler and Libby Greenhalgh told a panel discussion hosted by **PwC Bermuda** with the **America's Cup Event Authority**.

The event titled, ***Racing Forward: Taking Action, Creating Opportunities, Celebrating Success***, heard that women are working in important behind-the-scenes roles in the 35th America's Cup, but Ehler and Greenhalgh said there are absolutely also roles females can fill on the America's Cup boats.

Moderated by Nic Douglass, world champion sailor and commentator known as *the Sailor Girl*, the panellists shared their experiences in taking part in sailing's biggest races, as well as the current state of diversity in sailing and their vision for the future. They agreed their sport shared many of the same barriers to diversity faced in the business world.

"Diversity, whether in sport or in business can provide unique solutions to complex problems and scenarios," Douglass said. "I know that we don't have the answer today, but having conversations, and gaining support for diversity, in regards to women in sailing - on the water or in administrative, media or official roles - is crucial to ensure the best development and future for our sport."

Arthur Wightman, PwC Bermuda leader, commented, "In the spirit of furthering the discussion around diversity and gender equality in sailing, and learning from our shared experiences, we were pleased to host this event with the America's Cup Event Authority.

"The PwC global network is committed to advancing diversity and inclusion by such actions as cultivating a workplace where diverse perspectives are welcomed and respected, and where people feel encouraged to talk about diversity and inclusion. A growing body of research reveals that stronger business outcomes directly correlate with diverse teams and inclusive work environments, and we believe this also translates to sport."

Talia Lucas, PwC Bermuda's gender diversity initiative strategic leader, commented: "The participation of women in sport challenges gender stereotypes and discrimination, and as such, can be a vehicle to promote equality and empowerment for women. Besides the benefits for women themselves, their increased involvement can promote positive development in sport by providing alternative values, knowledge, capabilities and experiences."

Ehler and Greenhalgh said the role of men in challenging and changing inequality is critical as is the need for men to appreciate that the different perspectives women sailors bring aboard can be advantageous



Ehler is here working with the America's Cup on logistics including operation of the onscreen computer graphics. She was boat captain for the all-female Team SCA in the Volvo Ocean Race 2014/15 and is the media director for *the Magenta Project*.

"The Magenta Project is a collective of passionate, committed female sailors on a mission to accelerate women in sailing and the marine industry by creating pathways, empowering leadership and driving change," Ehler said. "Based on the principle values of diversity, collaboration, opportunity, challenge and performance, they are leading a growing movement across oceans."

Greenhalgh is the operations director for *the Magenta Project*. She was a navigator on one of the boats in the superyacht race in Bermuda this month.

"Diversity in sport and business is a growing topic of conversation and through open conversation we can begin to discover the barriers and create change," said Greenhalgh. "Some of the key areas that *the Magenta Project* has identified are the need to create opportunities to upskill women to an open environment and the need for men in the senior positions to support and help enable this, in order to create a diverse and successful team."

Libby Greenhalgh

Libby was the navigator onboard Team SCA analysing the weather, currents and other boat positions to try and identify to fastest route to the finish. Prior to joining Team SCA Libby had been working with the British Sailing Team across Youth, Junior and Olympic levels, providing venue weather forecasts research support and meteorological education. She has also been a weather forecaster for the Met Office, working both for military forecasting and other sporting events. Libby has vast experience in dinghy sailing, racing an Olympic 470 dinghy as well as small keelboats including SB20, J80 and a variety of 30-35 foot racing boats.

Abby Ehler

Abby was the boat captain onboard Team SCA keeping on top of the wear and tear and making sure the boat was always ready to perform at its best. She was also a helmsman/trimmer. Abby's entire sailing experience has been in a team environment. She competed in the 2001-02 Volvo Ocean Race with Amer Sports Too. In 2003 she won both the Rolex Fastnet Race and Rolex Middle Sea Race. Abby has a working career in the yachting industry, both on and off the water. She currently works for America's Cup Event Authority.

For more information, please visit www.themagentaproject.org.

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