

Oakley Capital invests in Sir Ben Ainslie's Athena Racing

Oakley Capital, a leading pan-European private equity investor, is pleased to announce that Oakley Capital Origin II ("Origin II") is investing in Athena Racing ("Athena"), the British America's Cup team and world-class sailing franchise founded and led by Sir Ben Ainslie, the most successful sailor in Olympic history.

Oakley's investment follows the creation of the landmark America's Cup Partnership (the "Partnership") which will govern the America's Cup. The Partnership is expected to enhance the commercial appeal and investability of the world's most prestigious high-performance sailing competition. Oakley played a central role in shaping this new framework, under which the five founding teams, including Athena, will sit in an equal partnership position.

The America's Cup combines heritage with advanced technology, elite sport, and strong commercial appeal. First contested with a race around the Isle of Wight in 1851, the Cup is widely recognised as the oldest international trophy in world sport, predating the modern Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup. The contest stands as one of sport's most demanding technical challenges, with only four nations- New Zealand, Australia, the United States and Switzerland- lifting the trophy across its 174-year history.

The new Partnership marks a major step forward, pairing the Cup's legacy with a more modern and commercially focused structure. It gives all teams board representation, establishes neutral, professional management to drive audience and revenue growth, introduces cost-control measures to create a more competitive field, and sets a stable biennial calendar to support long-term investment, positioning the Cup as a leading, global sports property.

Oakley's investment in Athena reflects its strong belief in the enduring appeal and growth potential of premium sports properties. The new partnership enables Athena to pursue a multi-cycle strategy across future America's Cup contests, with longer-term sponsorship deals, R&D investment, and talent acquisition. Oakley will support Athena Racing by accelerating commercial partnerships, expanding brand visibility, and scaling operations.

In addition, Athena Racing and sister company Emirates GBR, representing Britain in the fast-growing SailGP league, a separate nation vs. nation global sailing competition, will collaborate to create a unique proposition for sponsors and sailors in elite competitive sailing.

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Peter Dubens, Co-Founder and Managing Partner, Oakley Capital, said: “The America’s Cup is the pinnacle of sailing and an icon of sport, won by only four nations since 1851. We’re partnering with Sir Ben and the Athena team precisely as the Cup enters a new era. With strong governance and a neutral management team focused on audience and media growth, the competition is set to broaden its appeal, improve accessibility and ensure long-term sustainability.”

Sir Ben Ainslie, Founder & Team Principal, Athena Racing, said: “I’d like to pay credit to Oakley for the critical role they have played in helping Athena and the other teams to shape this new partnership for the America’s Cup. Previously a Defender-led, winner-takes-all format, the Cup now moves into a unified chapter that gives every team a seat at the table and a shared focus on commercial growth and continued technical innovation. With Oakley’s backing and expertise, and by drawing on the next generation of sailors with our Athena Pathway programme, Athena is well-positioned to help grow the Cup into one of the world’s most iconic and commercially successful sporting properties.”