

THE NUMBERS ADD UP FOR THE GALWAY VOLVO OCEAN RACE

- 1.8 billion global TV audience
- 2 week free festival
- 750 volunteers
- 200,000 visitors
- 500 spectator boats
- 10,000 school children
- 5km of bunting flags
- 1000 performers
- 200 international media

On the eve of [23 May](#), Galway Bay will be ablaze with bonfires as it awaits the fleet of Volvo Open 70s en route from Boston in the Volvo Ocean Race 2008-09. Galway, the first port stopover in Europe after seven months racing around the world, will be ready and waiting to offer true Irish hospitality to the Volvo Ocean Race.

At a briefing [today](#) (Wednesday [18 March 2009](#)) in the Galway Volvo Ocean Race media centre, Communications Director of the Volvo Ocean Race, Marcus Hutchinson explained the importance of the event to Galway and Ireland internationally. *'The Volvo Ocean Race 2008-09 has now passed the half way stage and has already visited the first five stopover ports. The visitor numbers and media return to date have far exceeded all estimates, especially in the new territories. Every time the race is mentioned Ireland and Galway have benefitted directly.'*

On [24 May](#) the official opening of the Galway Volvo Ocean Race village will be produced by Arcana and will feature performances by Frankie Gavin, the Galway Tenors, and the Cois Claddaigh Choir and each of the skippers of the competing teams will be officially welcomed to the city by Mayor Padraig Conneely.

Over 200,000 visitors from Ireland and overseas are expected to travel to Galway for the event which is expected to generate an estimated €43m in revenue for the region. It will be the biggest sporting event in Ireland since the Ryder Cup and Failte Ireland on behalf of the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism is the principal sponsor.

Bank holiday weekend [30 May](#) to [01 June](#) will be a showcase of sea and land based activities with the Volvo Open 70's competing in Galway Bay for valuable points in the inport race which will be visible from Salthill promenade. During day and evening there will be a host of activities for all ages from street theatre, free concerts, Volvo grinder challenge and model boat racing, art trail and lots lots more.

Fiona Monaghan, General Manager, Failte Ireland West at the briefing stated *'Failte Ireland is pleased to be associated with an event of this calibre which has the potential to showcase Galway and the West of Ireland to a global audience of 1.8 billion. It is crucial that the tourism industry, the local business community and the people of Galway rally together to ensure the success of the Galway stopover. In addition to running an extensive domestic media campaign promoting the Festival, Failte Ireland will also be hosting a prestigious group of international journalists representing a variety of travel, lifestyle and epicurean publications.'*

Headline acts for the free festival concerts over the two week period include:

Thursday **28 May** – Hothouse Flowers

Saturday **30 May** – Sharon Shannon

Sunday **31 May** – Kila

Thursday **04 June** – Aslan

Friday **05 June** – The Stunning

'It is now just over two months to the day when Galway's welcome will be felt by the teams and the race fans. Galway's plans and the geography of the city, harbour and bay are ideal for what is on its way here. Let's Do It Galway's plans for the stopover festival will definitely showcase the best of Irish hospitality, entertainment and culture and I'm sure this will be of value long-term to Ireland.'
added Marcus Hutchinson

During the stopover over 10,000 school children will visit Galway on school tours and will have a unique opportunity to see the Volvo Open 70s up close and to meet with some of the sailors. Currently over 11,000 students are taking part in the HB Let's Do It Ocean Adventure Schools Programme on a weekly basis.

The full sailing and festival programme will be launched in April but all the latest news is issued through an ezine. Register on www.galwayvolvoceanrace.com to receive all the latest news.

Galway Volvo Ocean Race Outline Programme

22-24 May Arrivals Weekend

Unique celebrations as each boat arrives; Official opening ceremony;

Free music concerts in race village: children's entertainment and street theatre by day

30 May -01 June In port racing weekend

30 May In port racing; 31 May Pro-Am; Volvo Ocean Race departure and arrival ceremonies; Live Action from Salthill promenade; Boat Show, Free music concerts in race village: children's entertainment and street theatre by day

05-06 June Departure Weekend

06 June Departure of yachts and farewell ceremony; Free concerts; Farewell celebration in race village

Midweek (25-29 May & 02-05 June)

Schools visits to race village; meet the crews; special interest talks; on water activities and regattas and 'Come and try' sailing event.

Further details of all Galway Volvo Ocean Race activities available at www.galwayvolvoceanrace.com

To join the HB Ocean Adventure education programme log on to www.letsdoitschools.com

Follow the Green Dragon on www.greendragonracing.com

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Notes to Editors

About Let's do it Galway

Let's Do It Galway is the event organiser

Let's Do It Global is a non-profit organization - with senior members contributing on a voluntary basis. It is run in a professional, business-like way using a team of dedicated professionals with responsibility for key specific aspects of the hosting of the Volvo Ocean Race 2008-09.

[galwayvolvoceanrace.com](http://www.galwayvolvoceanrace.com) <<http://www.galwayvolvoceanrace.com>>

About the Volvo Ocean Race

The Volvo Ocean Race 2008-09 is the 10th running of this ocean marathon. Starting from Alicante in Spain, it has for the first time, included ports in Asia. Spanning some 37,000 nautical miles, stopping at 11 ports and taking nine months to complete, the Volvo Ocean Race is the world's premier yacht race for professional racing crews.

The first race left England in [September 1973](#) and was originally known as The Whitbread Round the World Race and was a name conceived over a pint of beer more than 30 years ago. [volvoceanrace.org](http://www.volvoceanrace.org) <<http://www.volvoceanrace.org/>>

About Fáilte Ireland

Fáilte Ireland administers the International Sports Tourism Initiative, which was introduced by the Government in [January 2000](#) to build Ireland's international reputation as a quality sports destination and, consequently, to increase sports tourism, a growing element in international tourism and travel.

The objective of the initiative is to attract major international sporting events to Ireland with tourism potential - i.e. that delivers significant overseas visitor numbers, significant global media coverage, appeal to our target markets and showcase the physical landscape and/or special interest product.

[failteireland.ie](http://www.failteireland.ie) <<http://www.failteireland.ie>>

[discoverireland.ie](http://www.discoverireland.ie) <<http://www.discoverireland.ie>>