



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Fireball World Sailing Championships Return to UK for the first time since 1981
*Major Boost for the South West as the International Fireball World Championships 2026 is set
for the English Riviera
Torquay, 20 – 31 July 2026*

The internationally renowned [Fireball World Championships](#) will return to UK shores in July 2026, as Torquay is confirmed as the host venue for the prestigious regatta - bringing world-class sailing back to the English Riviera for the first time in over four decades.

Organised by the [Royal Torbay Yacht Club](#), the event is expected to draw over 90 international crews to race on the acclaimed sailing waters of Torbay, along with hundreds of visitors, including families, spectators, and global sailing enthusiasts. The event is being championed by the English Riviera BID Company as a landmark opportunity to showcase the region on the international stage.

Bob Penfold, Royal Torbay Yacht Club committee member, commented: “The Royal Torbay Yacht Club is delighted to see the Fireball World Championship returning to Torquay for the first time since 1973, and our members are looking forward to welcoming Fireball sailors from around the world. Torbay is a stunning sailing venue and it is an honour to have been chosen as the host club in 2026.”

The Fireball, a high-performance two-person dinghy class, has seen a resurgence in popularity in recent years, with strong international participation - over 70 boats competed in the last European Championship, and more than 120 are expected at the upcoming Worlds in Lake Garda.

Torbay’s sailing pedigree is internationally respected. The bay hosted sailing events during the 1948 Olympic Games, and in recent years, has staged major global regattas including the Dragon Gold Cup and the World Championships for the J/70, Melges 24, and SB3 classes.

Vyv Townend, former Fireball World Champion, added: “The UK Fireball Fleet is incredibly excited to be coming to Torquay for the Worlds in 2026. In recent years the World Championships have been held in some stunning locations such as Barbados, Thailand, South Africa and Australia, so it is only fitting that, for a domestic Worlds, we are going to one of the UK’s premier sailing venues.”

Beyond the racing, Torquay promises a quintessential British seaside experience. The Fireball UK Nationals will be held from Monday, 20th July, featuring three days of racing and concluding with a Prizegiving and Championship Dinner on Friday, 24th July.

Visitors and competitors can also expect a vibrant social programme, as the Fireball World Championship will begin with an Opening Ceremony on Sunday, 26th July, and continue with five days of racing, culminating in a Gala Dinner and Prizegiving on Friday, 31st July.

The local visitor economy is also set to benefit from this key date in this year's sporting calendar, with hundreds of sailors, families, and international supporters expected to travel to the English Riviera for the event. Accommodation, restaurants, and cultural attractions in Torquay - many within walking distance of the yacht club and harbour - are poised to welcome guests from across the globe.

"This is a major moment for the English Riviera," **said Carolyn Custerson, Chief Executive of the English Riviera BID Company.** "Hosting an event of this calibre puts a global spotlight on our world-class coastline, vibrant towns, and our growing reputation as a destination for high-profile sports tourism.

"Large-scale events like the Fireball Worlds are exactly what our Destination Management Plan is aiming to attract," **Custerson added.** "This is about putting heads on beds, supporting local businesses, and raising the English Riviera's profile as a year-round, must-visit destination."

Easily accessible by road, rail, and nearby ferry ports, and with a stunning natural harbour, Torquay offers the ideal blend of competitive sailing and coastal hospitality.

As global sailing eyes turn once more to Torbay, 2026 promises to be a defining chapter in the enduring legacy of British competitive sailing.

For guests who are looking to make a week of the Fireball World Championships, visitors are encouraged to arrive early, enjoy the stunning seafront setting, and experience the very best of the English Riviera's hospitality.

To view the regions incredible accommodation offering, visit <https://www.englishriviera.co.uk/accommodation>

For more information about the Fireball World Championships, visit www.fireball-international.com

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About English Riviera

The English Riviera Business Improvement District (ERBID) Company is a collaborative effort between over 1000 local businesses, authorities, and stakeholders dedicated to enhancing the tourism experience and promoting sustainable economic growth for Torbay.

Looking to Escape Your Everyday? With 22 miles of stunning coastline, the English Riviera covers Torquay, Paignton and Brixham. Torquay is the birthplace of Agatha Christie, the world's greatest crime writer, and the resort offers a vast array of culture, history, water activities, spas, festivals, entertainment and food and drink experiences. The resort is also an international cruise port.

As a designated UNESCO Global Geopark, the English Riviera has gained international recognition for its 400 million years of geological heritage and is promoted as One of Earth's Extraordinary Places.

For more information for consumers visit www.englishriviera.co.uk and for businesses visit www.englishriviera.co.uk/bid