



For More Information, Contact:
Nancy Christopher-Wilkes,
414/698-4915 or
nancy@platypus-ad.com

For Immediate Release

**WORLD ICE SAILING CHAMPIONSHIPS TAKE CENTER STAGE
IN THE STURGEON SPEARING CAPITAL OF THE WORLD**

Environmental Forces Make Lake Winnebago an Ideal Venue for Ice Racing

FOND DU LAC, Wis., -- Racers from 11 countries are looking for the wind in their sails and fast ice when they compete in the World Ice and Snow Sailing Championship (WISSA), Monday, Feb. 9 through Saturday, Feb. 14, in Fond du Lac. Thanks to a geological formation called the Niagara Escarpment, Lake Winnebago was chosen for this year's championship race series because of the 1,000-mile-long cliff that begins near the lake that creates a nearly constant flow of wind that blows down onto the surface and the shallow depths that typically make for awesome ice conditions and sturgeon spear fishing.

There are several race classes in the sport of ice and snow sailing, but WISSA is the only event where all of them come together in one location. Racers from Canada, Estonia, Russia, Finland, Poland, Germany, Latvia, Switzerland, Sweden, Ukraine and the U.S. will compete in all three classes: Sled Class, with handheld sails, otherwise known as windsurfing; Kite Class, which features kites with skis and snowboards; and Wing Class, which involves kite wings with skates or skis.

Fond du Lac local Kevin Gratton is this year's race director and owner of [Wind Power Windsurfing & Kiting Center](#). Gratton was Principle Race Officer (PRO) for the 2008 U.S. Windsurfing Nationals and Advisor for the 2014 U.S. Windsurfing Nationals. He has been a race director since the mid-eighties with over 50 events as PRO. His brother and Oshkosh resident Andy Gratton will be one of the judges. Gratton was former race officer and judge for the 2008 and 2014 U.S. Windsurfing Nationals, Ice Boats and Sailboat Regattas, and was the 2010 Canadian National Champion. Last year, he took first place in the Cork Windsurfing Regatta. Gratton will be joined by Richard Liepiņš, from Latvia, as a judge. Liepins has been a Winter Windsurfing (WW) Short Track Slalom (STS) Race Officer in most of the major WW STS World Ice and Snow Sailing (WISSA) events since 2009 and an STS Judge in Winter Windsurfing Europe (WWE0) since 2012.

Some of the international racers to watch for are Dominik Zimmermann (Dom), 33, from Germany. Zimmermann snow and land kites and is a two-time German Buggy Champion and four-time Buggy Euro champion. Klaus Faisst, from Ontario, is 71. Faisst started ice and snow sailing and wind surfing in the 1980's. He has been competing at WISSA since 1991. His preferred class is the "wing class", but he has also competed in the sled and kite class.

The Fond du Lac community is pulling out all the stops for these athletes, hosting parties and events throughout the week. The races will culminate on Saturday with start of the 2015 Sturgeon Spearing season. Overlapping each of these events is Fond du Lac's 26th Annual

Sturgeon Stampede, a winter outdoor festival, which kicks off on Thursday, Feb. 12 and runs through Sunday, Feb. 15.

"We are fast-becoming the Midwest winter destination in celebration of sturgeon spearing," says Craig Molitor, president and CEO of the Fond du Lac Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (FACVB). "There's something for everyone to enjoy with all the winter activities, games, races, and spectacular fishing, and the local businesses are making sure it's an affair to remember."

An event schedule of the races and winter activities, FAQs, and registration requirements is available at wissa2015.com. To learn more about the competitors, go to http://www.windpowerwindsurfing.com/shop/index.php?main_page=page&id=8#registrants.

WISSA 2015 is hosted by the Fond du Lac Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Winnebago Association of Kiteboarders and Wind Power Windsurfing Kiting Center. The main sponsor of the event is Altmeyer Electric.

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