Beat: Sports

AMERICAs CUP TEAMS VOTE TO DOWNSIZE BOATS

COST CUTTING MOVE FOR 2017 REGATTAS

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USPA NEWS - America's Cup teams have voted to reduce the size of boats to be sailed in the 2017 regatta in Bermuda, a cost-cutting move that could lead to the two strongest challengers dropping out.

In a statement Tuesday night, organizers said only that a majority of teams favored the move from 62-foot catamarans to cats in the 45- to 50-foot range. They also said the majority of challengers favor all racing being held in Bermuda rather than having a qualifying regatta in Auckland, New Zealand.
It's believed Italy's Luna Rossa and Emirates Team New Zealand voted against the unprecedented proposal to change the size of the boat in mid-cycle.
Luna Rossa said last week it "will be obliged to withdraw" if the race boat was downsized. Team New Zealand supported the Italians. America's Cup organizers then pulled a qualifying regatta from Auckland. The Kiwis said they needed that regatta to secure government funding.

Emirates Team New Zealand said on its Twitter account Tuesday night that it has filed for arbitration to reinstate Auckland for the qualifier "based on signed documents and fulfilment of the AC35 protocol."
There's some question how much the downsize will save considering that some teams have spent several months and tens of millions of dollars designing 62-footers.
As it was, the 62-foot cats were said to be a cost-saving measure over the 72-foot catamarans used in the 2013 America's Cup. The decision by two-time defending champion Oracle Team USA to contest the America's Cup in Bermuda rather than in the United States has made it difficult for some teams and the event itself to raise sponsorship money.

If Italy and New Zealand drop out, Oracle Team USA would conceivably have an easier shot at retaining the oldest trophy in America's Cup history.

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