

13.09.09

THE NEW YORK TIMES

Section 3

# BUSINESS



CHRISTOPHER



Ben Ainslie and the crew of Teamorigi, which has given advertising space on the sails to the Carbon Trust

## Sailing into a greener future

### Iain Dey

A REVOLUTIONARY green sponsorship deal will be unveiled this week by the British team competing to win the America's Cup sailing competition.

Teamorigi, run by the entrepreneur Sir Keith Mills, has given away the prime advertising space on the sails of its boat to the Carbon Trust, a not-for-profit greens adviser. Together they are launching a new environmental campaign named The Race for Change — a platform to attract other corporate sponsors. The team is captained by Ben Ainslie, the Olympic gold medalist.

The deal lies in the face of convention — most teams in the yacht race are bankrolled by billionaire businessmen and international companies. The Carbon Trust is not paying a penny for its involvement.

Mills, who has been funding the team's £15m-a-year running costs from his own pocket, believes the team's focus on the green agenda will help attract up to four

corporate backers to the project, raising £75m of funding.

"The America's Cup is a perfect vehicle to carry the message of climate change," said Mills. "In the current downturn, big companies are looking to get a lot more from the events and the sports teams they choose to sponsor. It doesn't cost any more if you just ask for money.

"A lot of companies are spending a lot of money on environmental projects. We are building a whole package through this deal with the Carbon Trust that will allow us to harness the power of sport with the environmental debate and help us all work towards lowering our carbon footprint."

A series of collaborative projects is planned. Mills has held tentative talks with a number of engine manufacturers about the possibility of designing the world's first green marine engine that will run on biofuels or electricity.

Ultimately, the Race for Change platform could lead to the creation of a new British eco-town.

"Britain invented the America's Cup," said Mills, "yet it's the only big sporting trophy we've never won. One of the great things about the America's Cup is that the winner gets to host the next event. We would love to be able to do that, and to use it as an opportunity to redevelop a British coastal town — and do it in an environmentally-conscious way."

The Carbon Trust will also ensure that Teamorigi limits its impact on the environment. Tom Dohy, the trust's chief executive, said: "It would be wrong for us to commit any of our money to a normal sponsorship deal — that would not be an appropriate use of our funds. Although we are not paying any money, there is a lot we are bringing to this project and we look forward to working on some interesting projects with whoever signs up."

### IN MONEY

What Sir Keith Mills does with his personal fortune

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