

# RACE TO ALASKA (R2AK) - The Full Pre-Race Interview with Team Turn Point Design



There is a lot of excitement about the new endurance boat race [Race to Alaska \(R2Ak\)](#) which starts on Thursday 4th June. The race will see 40 teams battle it out over 750 miles from Port Townsend, Washington, USA to Ketchikan, Alaska.

The emphasis is on fun and adventure with few rules in place. The teams are free to choose whatever watercraft they want with the only rules being that there are no engines or support teams. Also there are only three checkpoints along the way so teams can largely choose their own course.

One of the teams on the start line will be [Turn Point Design](#). We caught up with team member Nige Oswald to find out about their choice of boat and pre-race preparations...

**Q - Tell us a little about your team Turn Point Design:**

**Nige** - Team Turn Point Design consists of Nigel Oswald and Brandon Davis. Brandon Davis owns Turn Point Design, a composites tooling and fabrication business based out of Port Townsend. Brandon has spent many years in these waters previously as a kayak guide, boat captain and when cruising. I have raced sail boats for 30 years and have always wanted a reason to sail the inside passage up to Alaska.

**Q - Why have you been brave (mad!) enough to enter the Race to Alaska?**

**Nige** - We have both spent a good part of our lives on the water and felt like it was time for an adventure! It's also the first time this race is being run and there are only so many opportunities you get to do something for the first time. The challenge, amazing scenery and excuse to spend a lot of time on the water where pretty significant factors too!

**Q - Your team has chosen to custom build a catamaran. Without giving away any race secrets can you tell us a little about why you choose this design of boat?**

**Nige** - This race is pretty different from a lot of purely sailing races in that you are allowed to use human power to move the boat. With this in mind, you either need a Viking long boat or a boat that is small enough to be propelled easily when rowing/paddling/peddling. With this in mind we think the sweet spot is somewhere in the 24ft range and needs to be light and easily driven. It really needs to be a multihull as it's harder to human power a mono hull, dragging the keel around etc. We then needed to make sure we had a small cabin for some protection and really there were no other boats around we felt met those criteria. We had also been talking about building something like this for the last year or so and really this race was the catalyst for making it happen.

**Q - What do you think the greatest challenge of the race will be for you?**

**Nige** - From a strategy perspective it will be the tides and currents, there are some crazy narrows along the route where currents can run in excess of 10kts and create all kinds of water disturbances so these will need to be planned around. From a human perspective though it will be the long hours sailing or peddling, the cold, wet and physical challenges when the weather kicks in.

**Q - Eco Power Shop has sponsored the solar panels on your race boat – the [Solbian All-in-One](#) flexible marine panels. How do you think renewable energy will help you in the race?**

**Nige** - Between navigation, running lights for running at night and safety equipment like bilge pumps, we need to make sure we always have energy on hand. Solar is the obvious choice as it's light weight, takes zero thought or energy to engage and is always on when the sun is up. As we head north and are getting close to the longest days of the year, we should be able to maximize the amount of charging time. The Solbian All in One panels are a great solution, especially on smaller boats as you literally plug in a couple of wires to the battery, there are no extra charge controller boxes to take up space and the installation is incredibly fast. Combined with the efficiency of the panels themselves, we are thrilled with the solution. Thank you so much to Eco Power Shop for helping us with these!

**Q - Another rule of the race is that the team should be self-supported so they'll be no support boat with catering. I see you've been experimenting with bacon-and-cheese flavoured crickets as race rations!?! What's been your favourite food out of all the race rations you've tried so far?**

**Nige** - The crickets were surprisingly edible! I could not do it until one of my kids ate one first and peer pressured me. We are mainly using a selection of freeze dried foods from companies like Mountain House and Alpine Aire and I think they are all really good. I would not have an issue eating them at home!

**Q - As well as building a boat and tasting crickets, what other race preparations have you been up to?**

**Nige** - We have been training pretty hard on general strength and fitness but with a lot of focus on recumbent bike training as that will be our human powered setup. Fitness along with studying the weather and currents on the route have been the main priorities.



**Q - Finally on a scale of 1-10 how excited are you about the race?**

**Nige** - 10!

Thanks team Turn Point Design - good luck from all of us at Eco Power Shop!!



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