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Update: Emirates Team New Zealand

Spark 5G helping the boat go faster.

Real time data from race boat to chase boat – Spark announces next step with Emirates Team New Zealand.

Spark New Zealand today announced that it is now trialling a 5G service on the water for Emirates Team New Zealand, delivering on their promise to help make the boat go faster in the bid to defend the next America's Cup.

The 5G service covers parts of Auckland Harbour, off Milford and Takapuna, where Emirates Team New Zealand do some of their test sailing. The reduced latency and higher bandwidth of 5G means Emirates Team New Zealand can now livestream data and video back to engineers and designers at the base straight off the new AC75 boat, Te Aihe while it's sailing. Real time access to the data gives Emirates Team New Zealand a design advantage in preparing for the America's Cup racing.

The trial service is an extension of Spark's existing 5G Lab in Wynyard Quarter in downtown Auckland, and uses test spectrum on loan from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE). As part of the trial, Spark installed a 5G service at the Emirates Team New Zealand base in Auckland in July and has supplied 5G handsets to the team.

Dan Bernasconi, Head of Design for Emirates Team New Zealand said that the 5G service is a game changer for the team.

"There's a huge amount of innovation in the design and build of the AC75. The boat is a completely new concept so we need to be able to push the potential of this boat to its extreme in testing.

"Before the team had access to 5G they had to get a hard disk with all the data off the sailing boat, then the chase boat took it back to the base, and a team member would run the hard disk up to the data server at the base. Design work using the data couldn't happen until well after the boat had docked.

"Now we have 5G on the water, there are hundreds of real time data streams such as boat speed, ride height, and hydraulic pressure coming off the water and back to our design team at the base. Our team can do progressive design and development work during the day while the boat is sailing allowing our design-thinking to evolve much faster. We were never able to do this before 5G.

"The timing for us is perfect as we head into the busy period of testing on Auckland's Hauraki Gulf over the spring and summer months. We've got the advantage of time for testing on the race area and the advantage of trialling 5G for our data analysis ahead of the America's Cup in March 2021.

"The America's Cup is as much a technology race as a yacht race. We know that in order to win the Cup we need to win the innovation race. Using 5G allows us to explore more design options and buys us one of the most precious commodities in the America's Cup – time."

Jolie Hodson, CEO of Spark is delighted to have 5G live on the water for Emirates Team New Zealand.

“Getting 5G to trial live on the water for Emirates Team New Zealand is delivering what we said we’d do when we opened the Spark 5G lab last year – helping to make their boat go faster.”

“Looking ahead to the America’s Cup in 2021, we see huge opportunities to use the Spark5G service to innovate with Emirates Team New Zealand and to support the connectivity required for the America’s Cup village. It’s an international showcase opportunity for many of the advances that will be enabled by 5G.

“Our work with Emirates Team New Zealand is the next chapter in our Spark 5G story and will provide valuable data to support the eventual rollout of 5G to New Zealand.”

Hodson added that the team’s use of 5G demonstrates the difference it will make to New Zealand businesses, with the ability to transmit data at speed and with precision to improve performance, to help them grow and compete against the best in the world.

“The potential of 5G goes far beyond high speed wireless broadband connections and mobile phones. Many industries and businesses in New Zealand will have their own ideas on what their transformative technology could be enabled by 5G. We want to encourage businesses to begin thinking about how they can prepare for the future of Spark 5G.”

This 5G trial is a private service that is only available to Emirates Team New Zealand and is isolated from the rest of Spark’s network. It is delivered using Huawei equipment.

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maxon motor Australia is an Official Supplier to Emirates Team New Zealand. We follow the progress of their journey as Defender in the 36th America’s Cup campaign, March 2021.

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