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Auckland, New Zealand

Update: Emirates Team New Zealand

One year until the gun.

The clock continues to relentlessly count down to 4pm on the 6th of March 2021- the start of race 1 of the 36th America's Cup Presented by Prada.

It marks the first official race of the 'Defence' of the Auld Mug for the holder of the America's Cup. It is the first occasion that the trophy is officially on the line since it was won in Bermuda in 2017.

However, for Emirates Team New Zealand they are taking the view that it's not about defending the Cup, it is about simply winning it, much the same as all of the Challengers are trying to do.

"For the Challengers, all you are trying to do is win the Cup. When you are the Defender you also have other considerations, but at the end of the day, no matter who you are you still need to win it. So this mind-set is a subtle change, but I think a correct one and it's how we are all thinking here." Explained Emirates Team New Zealand COO Kevin Shoebridge who has previously been in the position as both a Challenger and a Defender.

At the end of the day, today is just another date in the long and arduous campaign for everyone in the team, but it is a good opportunity to momentarily take stock of what has been achieved by the 100+ men and women of the team so far, as well as looking at what is still to be accomplished if the team are going to be in a position to successfully win the cup again.

"One year to go has come around really quickly. It is a pretty exciting time for us as a team. Everything we have put in place over the last couple of years is aiming at the 6th of March 2021 and the subsequent weeks. We feel as though we are in a good space, we have a lot going on this year with developing boat one, developing the 12m test boat, we have boat 2 under construction and we are about to head off to the ACWS regattas. So by the time all of that happens, we are going to be getting pretty close." continued Shoebridge.

For some members of the team, right now is their time to perform under the immense pressure of delivering to extremely tight deadlines already.

"For us, this is it right now. This is our mini America's Cup within the campaign," said Construction Manager Geoff Senior when talking frankly about the construction of the team's second AC75 that will be racing in 365 days time.

"If we don't deliver this boat on time then we have failed. So there is a bit of pressure on us, but we are used to that and we know how important it is for the team to receive the boat on time. So we are all guns blazing from here, weekends, we are doing night shift as well. So we take it all pretty seriously."

Shore Team Manager Sean Regan is the one renowned for cracking the whip at the Emirates Team New Zealand base to make sure of the daily tasks, no matter how big or minute the detail, no stone is left unturned. "It just never seems to end at the moment, but the buzz will come in less than 9 months' time at the start of summer when the other teams start turning up and the vibe is going to be here.

And we all know what we are here for, we are certainly not here for the party. We have to produce a weapon for our sailors to go to war on the water with."

And that is very much the attitude across all departments of the team. A relentless year-long push to what is one of the most anticipated points of every edition of the America's Cup.

"It's going to be an amazing day on March 6th." Said Shoebridge.

"No one is really going to know on that day how it's going to play out. The Defender and Challengers wouldn't have sailed against each other since the last ACWS in December. So March 6 is quite a long way after that a lot of things can happen in that period of time so it's going to be a really exciting weekend."

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maxon Group 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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