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## Will history repeat itself for the 36<sup>th</sup> America's Cup?

**Three times winner and current Defender, Emirates Team New Zealand might just be the team to beat to win the 36<sup>th</sup> America's Cup when they go up against Italy's Luna Rossa Prada Pirelli. With an average age of 31 years, the crew between them have 7 Olympic medals and 35 world titles.**

The America's Cup World Series (ACWS) in December and Prada Cup in January-February were the first time that the AC75 class yachts had been sailed in competition anywhere, including by the competitors themselves. The boat's capabilities were on full display demonstrating how hard each team has pushed the frontiers of technology, design, and innovation.

Over the course of the ACWS, Emirates Team New Zealand was able to observe their competition including current challenger, Luna Rossa Prada Pirelli. Luna Rossa last won the challenger selection series back in 2000 on their first attempt at the America's Cup. This was the last time Emirates Team New Zealand met the Italians. As history shows Italy has not yet won the cup itself. They look strong and were totally dominant in the Prada Cup Final maintaining quiet confidence, but they are up against a sailing team in Emirates Team New Zealand who are knowledgeable, skilled, and very fast.

Emirates Team New Zealand will have collected a great deal of data from Luna Rossa's racing to date, with which to compare their performance and gain valuable insight into their opponents' tactics and strategy. The Kiwis approach to the America's Cup campaign holds a firm focus on innovation. Back in 2017/2018 when the design process began for the new current class of AC75 yachts, the entire concept was proven only through use of a simulator without any prototypes. From what we've seen at the America's Cup World Series, Emirates Team New Zealand won the last race by 0:16 seconds over Luna Rossa Prada Pirelli and, so far, the risk has paid off.

What cannot be ignored is the global pandemic, still firmly holding the world in its grip. Races have been disrupted with the delay of the America's Cup first match race on March 6, as well as the cancellation of the ACWS races in Sardinia and Portsmouth. We may have to wait a little longer to see if history will repeat itself – will Emirates Team New Zealand emerge winner of the 36th America's Cup, an event that is the pinnacle of sailing, the oldest trophy in international sport and the reason for which all teams have been pouring their hearts and souls into training for the last 3 years.

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