

Oceanic / Offshore Race Incidents from September 2009 – August 2010

Following requests at the November 2008 meetings to produce an update paper that details some of the notable incidents reported from oceanic and offshore races. The list below is a collection of a selection of press articles to form this yearly supporting paper.

2009 Flinders Islet Yacht Race

Secretariat Summary: Below are the initial press stories regarding a tragic accident involving the death of two sailors in Australia after the yacht grounded and sunk. While the press stories set the scene a very detailed report was produced following the incident which can be found at the following link:

http://www.cyca.com.au/sysfile/downloads/CYCA_Flinders_Islet_Internal_Inquiry_Report.pdf

Related Press Story

SOURCE. www.sail-world.com

Australia's Flinders Island Race Tragedy –waiting for official enquiry

1:24 AM Sun 11 Oct 2009 GMT



'Shockwave 5 off NSW Coast - Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race 2008 -as we want to remember her' [© Rolex/Daniel Forster](#)

The Australian sailing community is numb today and will stay that way for a long while. More because the conditions just before 3am on Saturday morning amongst the Five Islands off Port Kembla were so unlike those of Bass Strait 1998.

Here at Sail-World we've been involved in an offshore yacht racing tragedy at sea and the media and coronial aftermath.

It is our intention to wait for the official coronial enquiry, rather than to speculate on just what might have happened as Andrew Short's Riechel Pugh 80 PriceWaterhouseCoopers rounded Flinders Islet.

However for our international audience here is some of the mainstream media coverage from yesterday's tragedy.

Having sailed with and against Shorty and Sal over many years, all we can say is 'we, the Australian sailing community loved you both, you will be missed deeply. Fair winds.'

Rob Kothe, Allison Constable and the Sail-World Team

Matt Pearce, one of the PriceWaterhouseCoopers rescued crew explained what happened to Sydney's Sunday Telegraph newspaper.

'We were rounding Flinders Islet, all of a sudden these couple of (wave) sets broke in front of us and out of nowhere I saw the reef,' Mr Pearce said.

'The bow came down, and we hit the ground hard. We tried to get off, but the keel was on the bottom.'

The crew pulled down the yacht's sails and started its motor in a bid to stay clear of the rocks.

'The boat gybed and the rig (mast) snapped and went over the side,' Mr Pearce said.

'The boat came back over the other side, and a couple more waves broke on the boat ... there was two metres of green water slapping the boat, dragging people out.'

Mr Pearce said he saw Ms Gordon washed overboard and Mr Short holding the steering wheel before the enormous force of a wave washed it off its pedestal, and the skipper overboard with it.



Andrew Short - Crosbie Lorimer

'I didn't see him again. Then the boat just got lifted up (by a wave) and landed on the island on its side. We had a 30-second window of opportunity, and we all jumped.'

Mr Pearce said the next few minutes were a blur of chaos.

'This big set came in and just grabbed it (the yacht). It just destroyed it.

'It took five minutes, and the boat was gone.'

Full story at www.news.com.au

Rescuers thought yacht exploded.

Sailors who rushed to the rescue of the stricken yacht PricewaterhouseCoopers and her crew off the NSW South Coast yesterday were so stunned by the amount of debris in the water, they believed there had been an explosion at sea.



Sally Gordon offshore - Franck Gicquiaud

But Quest crewman Peter Messenger said the terrible truth of the tragedy became apparent when he saw a small piece of the yacht, with her former name Shockwave written on it, floating among the mess.

Mr Messenger said he and his crewmates' worst fears were realised when they spotted what they at first thought was a sailing jacket floating among the debris.

'I've never seen a boat look like that,' Mr Messenger said. 'It looked like it had just exploded. The water was just littered with the boat, diesel, strobe lights, a couple of boots and a jacket, a wet weather jacket.'

'From a distance we thought [the jacket] was empty. We went back.'

'It was Andrew.'

Full story at www.news.com.au

2009 – Atlantic Rally for Cruisers**Secretariat Summary: 2 incidents, rudder loss and rig failure****Related Press Story – event media****1 Crew safely evacuated - yacht abandoned pending salvage**

The ARC yacht Auliana II has been abandoned and the crew evacuated following the loss of the yacht's rudder in the early hours of Monday morning.

Skipper Christian Potthoff-Sewing, from Bielefeld in Germany and his seven crew members were safely ashore in Arguineguin, Gran Canaria, late yesterday evening (23/11/2009) some 36 hours after taking the start of ARC 2009 in the IRC Racing Division.

At around 04:00 on Monday 23/11/2009 the yacht lost its rudder some 70 nautical miles southwest of Gran Canaria. The exact cause of the breakage is unknown, though the on-watch crew doesn't think that the yacht struck any debris in the water.

Unable to make steerage back toward Gran Canaria, the skipper contacted MRCC Las Palmas at 0600 on Monday, requesting assistance with a tow. At around noon, a lifeboat from the Spanish Maritime Rescue Service (Salvamento Maritima) was on station and the tow was soon underway. However, owing to the increasing wind strength (between 20 and 28 knots) and direction of the swell, the towing line repeatedly pulled deck cleats off the lightweight racing yacht - Auliana II is a one-off JV53.

With the daylight fading, the entire crew was evacuated from the yacht as a safety measure, though attempts to tow the yacht continued. The salvage crew was unable to secure a line to the deck-stepped mast, and after several more frustrating attempts, the decision was made to abandon the yacht and return the crew ashore.

The yacht is fitted with a Yellowbrick Iridium satellite tracker and its position is being monitored by MRCC Tenerife, as attempts continue to salvage the yacht.

Meanwhile, the all-German crew received a warm welcome as they stepped ashore in Gran Canaria, where they arrived looking tired, but in good spirits. They were given hot tea and food and offered a change of clothes and taken to a local hotel.

2 ARC crew evacuated from yacht Pelican after rig failure

The five crew members of British yacht Pelican were evacuated from onboard their 53 foot Roberts design last night following a rig failure, approximately 325 nautical miles west of the Cape Verde Islands.

The Singapore flagged merchant vessel Crimson Mars diverted to assist the yacht at the request of MRCC Falmouth, after skipper Darryl Saxton called a MayDay yesterday afternoon citing the 'unacceptable risk to his crew' of remaining aboard, as the yacht was also unable to motor and the rig was considered to be in a dangerous condition following several failures. MRCC Falmouth and MRCC Ponta Delgada (Azores) were involved in co-ordinating the evacuation of the yacht with the merchant ship.

At approximate position 18° 01N 030° 27'W, the MV Crimson Mars rendezvoused with the Pelican, and as the yacht was unable to manoeuvre, the ship's Master decided to transfer the crew of the Pelican via line and lifebuoy. All crew were safely aboard by 0200 hours. The MV Crimson Mars is now en route to Gibraltar and the Pelican has been abandoned; the owner having taken the decision not to scuttle the yacht. At the time of the incident, weather conditions were around F4 ENE with a swell of up to 2 metres.

All 5 crew of the Pelican, are from the United Kingdom, and the yacht was taking part in the annual Atlantic Rally for Cruisers, which departed Las Palmas de Gran Canaria on 22 November.

2009 October – J/120 Sinking while Cruising

Secretariat Summary: The J/120 involved in the following incident wasn't racing however the design is a prominent cruiser/racer.

Related Press Story

SOURCE <http://www.sailinganarchy.com>

We've heard from two sources that the J/120 J/World, sailing in the Baja Ha skippered by our friend Wayne Zittel has sunk today somewhere off of Ensenada. All on board are thought to have escaped to a liferaft but we don't know anything else. [Anybody?](#)

6:41 AM -

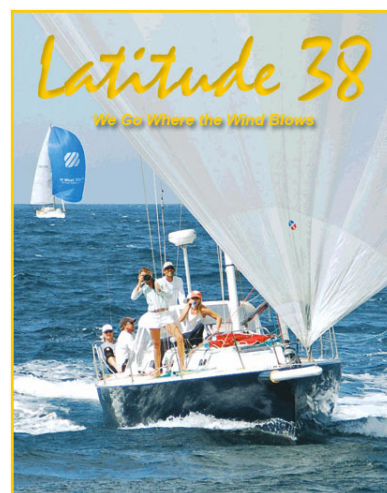
Hey All -

Thanks for all the good thoughts. Yes, the boat has sunk but everyone is safe and sound.

The boat was heading south in the Baja-Ha-Ha with two instructors (Eugenie and Barry) and three students on our annual cruise south to our Puerto Vallarta location. They put into Ensenada briefly for some minor repairs (a loose wire in the wiring harness seems to have been the culprit), then headed back out Tuesday morning. I got an email from them in the evening reporting that all was fine and they were making good time. They made the scheduled roll call in the AM.

Here is what I know from the brief conversations I have had with the crew: about 10am, they came across a pod of whales. Their behavior was described as 'erratic.' One or more of the whales struck the boat repeatedly, and the boat began taking on water at a rapid pace. It sounds like, not surprisingly, most of the damage was around the rudder. They made an attempt to bail the boat and get a distress call out on SSB, but it was clear that the boat was a loss. They activated the EPIRB, boarded the liferaft, and the boat was reportedly gone within 7 minutes of the strike. As I understand it, the boat did not capsize in any way.

I was in contact with the the USCG from the time the EPIRB went off. They did an absolutely stellar job. Within four hours, they reported that they had safely lifted all five sailors into the helicopter and were returning to San Diego. Eugenie has a bruised hand, but there were no other injuries. I personally am in shock... this is the stuff you read about but you think will never really happen. You can make all the preparations in the world, load boat with experienced sailors, and still have unexpected consequences. A bit humbling, to be sure. We all need



to remember that when we go sailing, we really go to sea in every sense.

I know we will get a good debrief from the crew, and we'll be sure to post more info and some 'lessons learned,' but I am tremendously relieved that everyone is safe. All of us here at J World are in deep gratitude to the folks of the USCG. Man, they run a great operation.

Anyway, that's the latest report from here... we can put to rest the questions of keels and structural failure and all that... the boat was a great boat. She was hull #9, the ex-Gannett, ex-Crosswave, now known simply as "J World." We sailed her some 10,000+ open ocean miles per year, and raced her in San Francisco and Mexico, not to mention subjecting her to all the abuses that students can dish out, and she took it in stride.

Anyway, thanks again to all of you out there for the support...

All the best,

Wayne Zittel
J World Performance Sailing School
San Francisco Bay | Puerto Vallarta, Mexico

10/29/09

2009 – Transat Jacques Vabre

Secretariat Summary: Multi50 pitchpole

Related Press Story

SOURCE <http://www.dailysail.com>



Photo: Marcel Mochet /AFP

Violent pitchpole

Yves le Blevec and Jean le Cam give their account of last night's capsizing of Actual

Monday November 9th 2009, Author: [James Boyd](#), Location: [United Kingdom](#)

Since her capsizing last night in the early hours of the Transat Jacques Vabre, Yves le Blevec and Jean le Cam's Multi50 trimaran *Actual* has been towed to Cherbourg with its mast intact thanks to the Goury lifeboat crew and ocean racer Halvard Mabire, who lives nearby and assisted in the salvage.

According to le Blevec at the time of their pitchpole they were sailing at 20 knots in 20-25 knots of wind when at 18:45 French time last night she abruptly pitchpoled. At the time le Blevec was on the helm and le Cam was in the cockpit. The boat stopped abruptly, the pitchpole occurring in just seconds. Le Blevec fell into the water from his position in the cockpit while the experienced le Cam dived down below.

"I felt reassured to find myself in the water," recounted le Blevec. "But then I had a new moment of fright when I saw the boat falling on top of me. I said to myself that the situation was about to become critical. The boat came down quickly, not in a friendly way because the

netting was above me. By a miracle the boat moved and I was able to get up on to the boat without being imprisoned, so I wasn't in the water for a very long time. At that time Jean was inside but did not know where I was. When I got up onto the boat I called "Jean" and he answered me. We called each other because we were both worried about each other. Quickly we opened the escape hatch which enabled us to communicate. We knew we had to avoid a further accident because we were not far from the traffic separation scheme as well as the trajectory of other competitors. Very quickly Jean put on his TPS survival suit and got on to the hull with flashlights and a VHF radio. We didn't want to start getting help from everyone, but simply to avoid being a danger to other boats."

Le Cam marked out the perimeter of the boat with flashlights. They didn't set off their EPIRB so no Mayday was issued.

Meanwhile the CROSS (coastguard) in Jobourg immediately issued a notice to shipping warning of their position.



Le Cam, who has been involved in numerous multihull capsizes in the past, including famously one mid-Atlantic with Eric Tabarly during a two handed race, said that he'd never experienced such a brutal capsize, the whole incident occurring in just three or four seconds. He said the sea state off the north of the Cherbourg peninsula was "usual" in 25 knots of northeasterly wind. It had been like hitting the front brakes on a bicycle, causing the stern to overtake the bow.

At the time Le Cam said he didn't even have time to take a breath, but he was concerned for le Blevec who might get caught under the netting. "Yves did not know where I was and I did not know where he was."

Le Cam paid tribute to the rescue services who once they had arrived on the scene at 22:00 local time last night, sent a RIB from their lifeboat to *Actual* and, despite the sea state, put two men on board to help fix the tow rope. "This was not easy to do but they were very professional. They are really experienced people."

He and le Blevec remained on board during the tow which was at a ginger 2.5 knots. They stopped outside of Cherbourg because the mast was still attached causing them to draw 23m! With the help of the SNSM divers, they managed to detach the mast which before the start they were complaining was heavy, but had remaining in one piece during the pitchpole and the subsequent tow - upside down in the water for 12 hours. During this le Blevec injured his hand and was forced to leave the salvage to le Cam as taken ashore at 10:30 this morning.

"The Goury SNSM was brilliant, super professional," said le Blevec later. "Halvard Mabire was also the right man for the job, I trust him completely. He managed the situation extremely well with Jacky Huteau of the port, in order to find the people and the means necessary to find shelter for the boat and the mast." Ironically Mabire's Open 60 *Cherbourg Technologies* capsized exactly 15 years ago to the day in the Route du Rhum, but her fate was not so fortunate.

As to the cause of the capsize, le Blevec and le Cam don't have any answers. "Perhaps ran into an unidentified object," pondered le Blevec later. "We will have to step back and analyse the incident and the breakage with the designer Guillaume Verdier and the builder, Nicolas Groleau." However the photos of the incident clearly show that the bow has been virtually bludgeoned to port.

The Actual Team expressed their profound thank to the Jobourg coastguard and the SNSM rescue service from Goury for their professionalism, as well as the Yacht Club of Cherbourg, the port of Chantereyne for their reception and Halvard Mabire for his effectiveness.



Related Press Story

SOURCE by BT Team Ellen <http://www.btsebjosse.com>



'BT - Transat Jacques Vabre' [ThMartinez / Sea & Co ©](#)

Just before 1800 GMT, Sébastien Josse and Jean-François Cuzon were confirmed safe and sound, and in a helicopter heading back to Terceira (Azores). The helicopter was aboard the Ocean Explorer scientific vessel, which came to the crew's rescue. This episode has put an end to an extremely stressful and anguishing day.

Aboard a yacht two thirds full of water following significant damage to the coachroof, the two BT skippers, Sébastien Josse and Jean-François Cuzon, had activated their EPIRB distress beacon this morning at 1020 GMT.

The rescue operation was immediately kickstarted by the MRCC (Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre), in conjunction with the BT technical team and the Transat Jacques Vabre Race Direction. A tugboat is now on standby in the Azores, and all efforts will now be made to salvage the BT yacht.

The technical team left the UK at midday, and will be on the islands this evening to prepare this next phase. The BT sailing team extend their deepest thanks to the rescue services for all their remarkable efforts in finding and bringing assistance to Seb and Jean-François.

Previous information available - At approximately 11:00 GMT today, BT crew Sébastien Josse and Jean-François Cuzon have activated their EPIRB distress beacon after having suffered major damage following a night battling it out in fierce seas and winds reaching 60 knots at times.

In Detail:**The sequence of today's events:**

First alert 1020 GMT

At approximately 1020 GMT today, BT crew Sébastien Josse and Jean-François Cuzon have activated their EPIRB distress beacon after having suffered major damage following a night battling it out in fierce seas and winds reaching 60 knots at times. The skippers are in regular contact with Race Director Jean Maurel, and have reported significant damage to the coachroof, and water entering the boat. The MRCC are coordinating operations with the Transat Jacques Vabre Race Direction and the BT shore team, to ensure the safe recovery of the skippers. MRCC Falmouth confirmed that the RCC Azores was had sent a helicopter and a Navy vessel over to BT, whilst carrying out a satellite broadcast alert to shipping in the area.

This morning's message sent by Jean-François Cuzon said it all, and takes its full measure in the light of this morning's events. Having battled it out in waves reaching more than 8 metres of height, the BT boys were still very confident this morning, so one can only imagine the shock it must have been for them to discover the damage. Here is what Jeff wrote, a few hours before all hell broke loose: 'Impressive, the conditions are really hard on the water, 35 to 60 knots with a big swell (thankfully we are not upwind). Onboard BT, we just put our heads down and wait for better times, we just had a couple of gusts at 55 knots. Jojo has done a great job at the helm and we are now with only the main sail. We hope to get out of that terrible weather in the middle of the day.' With Veolia heading towards the Azores due to a torn mainsail track and Artemis also reporting a string of gear failures, last night's storm took its toll on the fleet and BT certainly endured the nastiest blow, after having led for most of the race.

1400 GMT - Rescue boat 30 miles away

Jeff Cuzon spoke to Race Director Jean Maurel at 1325 GMT approximately, the situation is stable on board and both men are secure, calmly waiting for the rescue operation to unfold. A helicopter is currently refuelling and will depart to locate BT as soon as possible. Due to the conditions it might not be possible to recover the skippers by air. However, a rescue boat is 30 miles away from BT and making best speed towards BT. The crew still have their handheld Iridium satellite phone, and the EPIRB beacon is functioning properly, reporting BT's position.

15:50 GMT

A scientific vessel is getting near BT's position, and a plane should also be in the perimeter very shortly.

16:05 GMT - News from Seb

Race direction just spoke with Sébastien, both men are perfectly fine and getting ready to seeing the plane fly over them very shortly. The visibility is rather bad.

1705 GMT - Visual contact

The Ocean Explorer vessel, taking part in the rescue operation, made visual and VHF contact with the crew aboard the BT yacht...

1800 GMT - They're safe!

After having considered all the options, decision was taken to use the helicopter aboard the Ocean Explorer and Seb and Jeff were lifted to safety and taken straight back to Terceira, in the Azores. A tugboat is now on standby, and all efforts will now be made to salvage the BT yacht. The technical team left the UK at midday and will arrive in the Azores this evening, with a planned departure Saturday morning to attempt to salvage the BT yacht. Currently the BT shore team have 15 minute position data from the yacht thanks to its tracker.

The shore team finally spoke to Sébastien Josse and Jean-François Cuzon tonight at 2245 GMT: 'I was afraid we'd have to spend the night on a boat that could go under at any moment,' said Jeff Cuzon before handing over to Seb. Sounding exhausted and understandably subdued, Seb relayed their daunting experience.

From Sébastien Josse:

It was 0930 in the morning and we were near the centre of the depression, which was our best strategy to try to win the race. We were not alone in this spot, we were close with Safran, Veolia Environment and Groupe Bel. We were sailing in 35-40 knots, but sometimes up to 55-58 knots, in the night... We know we have to take care as in the last position report we see we are bit faster so I call to Jeff to reduce headsail. We had three reefs in the mainsail and maybe after one hour, we drop the staysail. I was on watch outside, Jeff inside, and we had a big 'crack'. It was a wave, just a big wave but one big enough to break the roof.

I see half of the roof completely broken with a big hole in the deck and hundreds of litres of water in the boat...there was a lot of water inside the boat. I was really scared if we take a second wave that could sink the boat because two or three waves like that we could be straight under the water. We move the keel to have a lot of heel to protect the boat from the waves and we activated the EPIRB and call the race organization to tell them we are we starting to sink.

After that we prepare all the technical gear we need, our survival suits, VHF radio, our food and all that we need for the liferaft to live for a few days. Conditions never stop to decrease...all the day the wind never dropped under 45 knots and really big waves of 8 metre swells which was my biggest concern. After about five hours we have news from the land to know the time of rescue. First a plane came round us then a ship arrived [Ocean Explorer] and Jeff spoke to the ship by VHF. After that it was really quick we see the ship, we see the plane and after that the helicopter arrive. That was a good moment when we knew that we did not have to spend the night on the boat or in the life raft in 45 knots of wind. The heli just had 20 mins left of fuel so he stay with us for 8-10 mins to look how he can recover us and after he tell us by signal to jump in water. Jeff went first and after he was on board the helico, they did a second turn and he did the same for me, so in total 18 minutes to recover us. It is not a good feeling to lose a boat like that in the water.

by BT Team Ellen 8:30 PM Fri 13 Nov 2009 GMT



Photo of the boat nearing port after the salvage operation

2010 – Fisher Island Race**Related Press Story**

SOURCE Sailing Anarchy

There's been an outpouring of support from the NE Anarchists over the loss of Don 'Donzo' Wilkinson in the Fisher's Island "Round The Island" race on Long Island Sound last weekend. You can read [plenty of it in the thread here](#) and [contribute your own memory of Don](#), but Donzo's son Ben can better explain what happened, and what the community can do to best remember Don.



My dad passed away on Saturday September 4th, while sailing in a regatta on Long Island Sound - more specifically, Fishers Island Sound.

For years my dad sailed 50 footers around the world and he loved telling me about it and all the stories from him and his old friends. He owned an Eveyln 25.5 but for years he's sailed on a Farr 30 called *One More Time* with success in events such as Key West and Block Island Race Weeks. On Saturday, he was trimming main on the F30 in 30 knots of wind (a standard KW day). When we went for a gybe, the main didn't come. My dad gave the main a tug and it came. His head was about an inch too high, and the boom hit him in the top of the head. It happened fast, and he passed away doing something he truly loved.

We're holding a memorial service at the Mystic Baptist Church at 11 o'clock on Saturday, September 11th, with a reception to follow at the Ram Island Yacht Club. I'm inviting all of dad's old friends to join us in a celebration of life. If you do attend, flip flops and hawaiian shirts are preferred - that's what he would wear. Blue blazers are OK too. We will all miss my dad and if anybody that knew him could join us for one last goodbye to my dad, it would mean alot. My dad loved everybody (I think) and he was one of the best sailors I knew. Thank you everybody for all your support now and the support to my dad over the years he was a great sailor, friend and dad.

-Ben Wilkinson

Please check [this site](#) for more info and directions to the memorial service site, and to find out how to donate in Donzo's name.

09/08/10

2008 – Southern Straights Race

Related Press Story

SOURCE <http://www.sailinganarchy.com>

survive and save

The gnarly Southern Straights Race this weekend has produced a huge amount of discussion about race safety both here on SA and across the interwebs, with the internet providing the kind of data collection and analysis that was never before possible. This is the kind of learning tool that we must all take advantage of to prevent loss of life down the road when 'the big one' hits during our own race. You can certainly read tons of great stories and some tough ones from this gearbusting race [in the big thread](#), but Anarchist WHK clued us into the following flawless report from the captain of the Radiant Heat. That's the J/30 that rescued two MOB's from the capsized Incisor during the race and stood by while the Coast Guard rescued the rest. Learn from it, and for a little taste of what 50 knots and 15 foot seas looks like (in protected water, no less) have a look [at this serious surfing vid](#) from the big Perry racer/cruiser Icon. For a far more extreme view of things from a smaller boat - in this case, the J/109 Astral Plane, [don't miss this one](#). Watch it 'til the end. Now for Captain Tony's report from Radiant Heat, with a big thanks to the [J/30 Class site](#) for the story.

I have done the Southern Straits race before 3 times I recall. Twice on a Hunter Legend 35.5 and one on the J-30 Radiant Heat. I have also sailed Swiftsure and Patos Island races several times and one Vic Maui and a trip on a friend's boat up the Inside passage to Skagway and Glacier Bay. I do not consider myself a very experienced sailor but one who has been around a little bit and who is generally comfortable on and around a small sail boat in various conditions.

I had been away for 5 months and just returned to North Saanich in time to prepare the boat for Patos Island 2010 and other races and was entered and registered for the Southern Straits.

It is always difficult to have a regular crew who is available the same time as the skipper so often these races are done with short crew or strangers on board.

As both races were requiring a PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL YACHTING ASSOCIATION (PIYA) Certificate signed and on board for Category II, I went online and got the most recent copy of the updated certificate and reviewed the required boat equipment.

Category II states it is for "Yachts capable of racing in semi-protected waters, day or night, where heavy weather may be encountered." There is then a long list of requirements which must be met. This includes the specifications of the boat and the equipment to be aboard.

Category I states it is for "Yachts capable of racing exposed waters where the vessel must be self sufficient and capable of enduring heavy storms."

It would seem clear from this that Category II are not expected to race in off shore conditions or in heavy storms. Light Storms maybe??.

I checked all the supplies and placed extra harnesses, strobe lights, Flashlights and floatation gear aboard. I replaced the batteries in the man overboard gear and made sure the gear was easily deployed. This included the mandatory Life ring, MOB pole, drogue and light as a single unit (a big wave snatched it off and away it went. I was glad to see it deploy perfectly. Now I get to buy another one and do it all again) and also the rescue collar which was unpacked and repacked with the attached floatation light.

I was, I thought ready to pass inspection by the race committee if required. At this point I have not been involved in any rescues or man overboard situations although I had practiced drills

but in low wind conditions and flat seas.

The inspections by the race committees were more something of a nuisance to be rid of as they usually occurred after the race was finished and only to the boats likely to place in the race results. I submit that they were treated more of a fear factor that could disqualify one from the race after the fact and so deny the prize earned rather than a real safety featured requirement.

The exception to this was the Vic-Maui Race I did in 1996 where inspections for safety gear etc were carried out before the race. Non compliance meant that one did not take part. This ensured that all participants were fully compliant before the start.

On the day before the race I took Radiant Heat from North Saanich to the West Vancouver Yacht Club. Aboard were two crew, one who had sailed with me the previous week in the Patos Race and another who had sail a few time with me. Both had some degree of competence having owned their own sail boats for some years. Two other crew drove and met us in West Van. One is a member of the Coastguard auxiliary and owns his own boat and the other a stranger to me but with good credentials for sailing experience. I felt comfortable with the number of crew and the general level of experience. Subsequently this was to be an important factor to our survival and success in the rescue of two men afloat.

The evening before the race was a skippers meeting and weather briefing at 8 pm. As we were at supper I barely made it there on time but my crew were not there nor required to be.

The briefing was comprehensive and detailed by the Canadian Environmental weather forecaster, Meteorologist David Jones.

Charts, graphs, and computer simulations were displayed and as I recall the forecast went something like this. Race day would be windy with sustained winds of 25-35 knots in the morning with 30-40 knots in the midday from the south East. Around 4 PM there was the expectation that the wind would ease and veer to the Southwest. My plans were to be low of the mark on our approach and if the wind moved to the South West we would not be headed badly enough that we would overstand the mark by much and make a rounding. There was also a line drawn on this graph for "gusts". Gusts were generally in the 50 knot range but one place about 3pm showed gusts to 58 knots. This caused a level of apprehension in me that I noted. Some people muttered that the committee would postpone the start until the wind abated.

I later told the crew of the weather forecast and talked about the sustained 35-40 knots to be expected. I have sailed in 40 knots before but in protected waters. I knew it was not the wind one had to worry about but the seas. It was forecast they would reach 5 meters if the wind was as forecast. He was proven correct. The crew agreed they would sail.

We were in the club lounge and a stranger came by and sat for a chat. It was revealed that he was a lawyer from Calgary. In conversation he offered the opinion that the committee was treading on dangerous ground if they let the race continue having received the recent forecast, if there was injury or death. All skippers sign a waiver and agree that they are responsible for their own boat and crew and make their own decisions as to whether they will sail or not. However this person suggested that the committee would still have some liability in the current situation.

At this time I thought that the race would be called or postponed if there was no change in the forecast. The following morning, Race day, while at breakfast the weather was discussed but it seemed about 30 knots and there was no announcement on the bulletin board and it was a surprise to me that there was no morning pre-race skippers meeting. Talking to another competitor it was mentioned that the centre of the weather system had tracked further South over Victoria and that the race day weather was expected to ease. It seemed everyone was heading out.

The Start line for the race was off Dundarave Pier in West Vancouver. We motored out and

our first indication of strong wind was the beat to English Bay. The head winds were strong enough to slow us from 6 knots plus down to three and a half. This was because of the heavy chop as well. We made the start area just in time for the warning gun for the first sequence and with a reefed main and jib sailed around the area until our warning and had a decent start with the wind almost dead down wind. The wind picked up again and after a short while of trying to sail wing on wing I decided the conservative sail plan was the best and we sailed with only the reefed main. Before we passed Point Atkinson we were doing a steady 8 knots with touching 9 now and then. It looked like plenty of wind for us and we were staying with the fleet. Our course was about 250 magnetic and this gave us a deep broad reach and lots of speed.

Over the next two hours the wind strengthened as as we moved out into the strait the seas grew more tumulus and bigger. It was hard to keep the boat on an even keel sailing with the one sail and the helm was sometimes very heavy and we suffered from more than one round up but generally the course was dead downwind and we were shooting down the backside of the waves with a steady recording of 12 knots plus. 13 and 14 knot plus were now regular events. We were largely on our own out there. We could see no other sails except 2 some way behind. We recorded over 15 knots.

At this point we had an accidental jibe and as the sail came through the stress was too much for the wire pennant on the main sheet which parted. There was no other damage and a repair was quickly effected with the placement of a new shackle and a direct fitting of the sheets to the boom. At this point we took the time to put in a second reef in the main. While this was accomplished we were slow in the water doing 3-4 knots and we were overtaken by a boat sailing under jib alone. This we now believe to be Incisor. We attempted to sail with the double reefed main but we were unable to hold a course without rounding up. The wind was much stronger. At this time we decided to quit the race and called in to the committee to let them know. Seas were now estimated to be up to 20 feet on a regular basis and we motored on a course for Nanaimo. Most of the time the boat was at a 15 deg heel due to the wind and the seas were slightly forward of abeam. We were making about 5.5 knots and all seemed well when the warning light for the engine heat appeared. This of course was a concern but I hoped it would be ok as it has happened before for no apparent reason. I had had the engine fully serviced the previous week and there appeared to be no problems. Water cooling was passing through the exhaust. I crossed my fingers and hoped for the best.

Contingency plans were talked about and abandoned as we spotted this mast above the waves. I could see no hull but I thought it strange that a boat would be heeled that much. It was a strange thing but I now lost all sense of urgency and all my concentration was on the mast. Wind, seas, course, engine all passed back to the subconscious. Back to automatic pilot in my head. After saying, "Well we had better go over and see what that is about ", I simply turned downwind and shortly revealed to us was a boat, capsized, with no more than 2 feet out of the water but regularly over washed with the seas. Along this space were six people sitting, hanging, on.

My impression is that the seas were a little less at this point but I don't know. I did not dare to go too close to Incisor as the windward side would blow me on to the submerged craft and the leeward side had the mast. The crew of Radiant Heat were all active and talking to each other. I was busy with the piloting and circling around. May Day calls were made, The rescue collar was deployed and trailed behind. We yelled to Incisor that help was coming and they should stay with their boat. However two of their crew jumped into the water and one swam out to the trailing life sling but we were passed by. It is pretty hard if not impossible to slow a boat off the wind in 30-40 knots of wind. Then if the throttle is cut turning into the wind the boat comes to a halt without steerage. The men in the water were too close to their boat for me to pass by and turn up and circle around without fouling Incisor.

We came around again and the men were further away and this time one grabbed the rescue collar. As I could not stop the boat even at idle I was doing 5 knots and dragging him further from Incisor. He finally let go. I came around again and this time slowed down to 1-2 knots and we pulled him to the boat. As this man was large and waterlogged he was heavy! It took, I estimate, 15 minutes to get him aboard. All 4 crew had a hold but there was nothing to get a

hold of. There was nowhere to hook a line on. Nobody could get a line around the man. Nobody dare let go. Finally with several concerted shouts of heave the man was moved an inch at a time inboard over the side and under the lifelines and then he was aboard. He went head first down the companionway.

By now Incisor was a quarter mile or more away so we went back to circle around. 200 yard from Incisor we suddenly saw a man in the water. We were going upwind at this time and so I did a parking job next to the man and as he came along side he was grabbed. Same procedure all over again. This time everyone was more tired. The man in the water was weak. Another 10-15 minutes saw him finally pulled aboard, but not before we thought we had lost him. Several times his head went below the water. Finally a leg was lifted up and the crew with more coordinated shouts of heave finally got him aboard.

The Coastguard had now arrived and we turned for Nanaimo, One of the rescued had severe hypothermia in stage two and uncontrollable shivering. One was sick. Our crew helped them strip off and gave them dry bedding . An hour later we finally made it to sheltered waters and handed our passengers over to the RCMP Cat who had followed us in. All this while the engine ran with the hot light on and we made it into Nanaimo harbour and docked without mishap.(After adding oil and checking out the motor I ran the engine for 7 hours with no red light appearing while motoring back to North Saanich, Was it the oil light on??)

Our crew (in no particular order) of Rick Slauenwhite, Stefan Gashus. Blair Kelly and Bill Schuss are to be commended for the way they worked together and achieved the unlikely and pulled two people from the water.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

1. I think the Race Committee should have called the race and postponed it pending clarification of the weather forecast. Category II is for inland protected waters. The Straits are not that protected and in some regard are worse than open ocean being subject to shallow waters and stronger currents.

2. Most skippers should have decided not to sail. Admittedly this is a hard call when you have paid the money and done all the preparation. I should not have gone but did.

3. There should be a morning meeting and not just for skippers but for all crew with a final weather update which is 12 hours more current than the one we received.

4. The inflatable floatation devices are useless when being rescued and hauled aboard. One of the men had his ripped right over his head. He was left hanging on the side of the boat in a storm with no floatation gear to keep him afloat . If the crew had to let go he would have been drowned shortly afterward.

5 It should be mandatory that all crew wear proper harness at all time as well as floatation devices. Radiant Heat has gear that can be quickly attached to the topping lift and hauled up the mast to a sufficient height, then the other end can be attached to the harness and the 4:1 purchase would have allowed the person to be hauled aboard. The person hanging on to the rescue collar did not wear it as described and none of our crew thought to tell him to put it on so it was impossible to use the tackle to get the man aboard. This is attributable to lack of preparedness and lack of practice. This includes me too.

6. All harness must have a crotch strap to prevent it being pulled over the head of the person wearing it.

7. Category I,II,III or IV requirements should mean all boats are inspected prior to racing and not allowed to race if not compliant. The committee has then done their due diligence as far as boat safety is concerned

8. Skippers should take the time to explain the safety equipment and tackle to the crew. They should sign a statement to the Race committee that the crew is familiar with the boat and

equipment.

9. Maybe Coastguard can put on some courses for us to learn the best procedures needed to rescue people in the water.

For example I do not know if it would have been easier to get the men aboard from the windward side. Perhaps the waves would wash them aboard. On the other hand the freeboard was reduced to a foot on the leeward side.

None of these comments are to attach blame or are of a personal nature. These are things I have learned from last weekend. We must be better prepared. The next storm may be on the way home tomorrow

04/07/10

2010 – Round the World Attempt

Secretariat Summary: Abbey Sunderland rescue

Related Press Story

SOURCE <http://www.sail-world.com>

Abby Sunderland - the final minutes

10:16 PM Fri 2 Jul 2010



Sixteen-year-old adventure sailor Abby Sunderland told the detail of her rescue to the world's press when she arrived back in Marina del Rey in Los Angeles this week.

She described how she blacked out when a giant wave smashed her yacht's mast to pieces in the remote southern Indian Ocean.

Now safely home after her dramatic high-seas rescue, Sunderland today recounted the moment her dream of becoming the youngest to sail the globe alone came to a sudden, violent end.

'Abby rescue - Source: The Australian'

yacht, Wild Eyes, on June 10.

Sunderland was below deck fixing her engine when a 'rogue wave' struck her

'The boat rolled fast, I didn't have a lot of warning,' she said.

The 16-year-old surfaced to find her mast gone. 'I got outside and there was no mast there - just a one-inch stub,' she said.

Despite the trauma, she escaped with few injuries. 'You get a little banged and bruised but nothing serious,' she said.

'I did hit my head kind of hard and things went black for a second, but just for a second.'

Aware she had no alternative, Sunderland sent out emergency beacons, which set off a major two-week rescue and provoked a fierce global debate about whether her parents were irresponsible for letting her make the perilous world record attempt.

Australian officials have said they have no intention of asking her family, based in California, to reimburse taxpayers the hundreds of thousands spent on the teenager's rescue.

Sunderland today acknowledged Australia's generosity. 'I'd also like to thank the people of Reunion Island and Australia who indirectly funded my rescue,' she said.

The young adventurer, whose brother Zac has also sailed the globe alone, vowed to keep sailing.

'The more I sail the more I like sailing and I'm definitely not going to stop for a minute.'

She admitted she felt scared during her ill-fated four-month journey, but insisted she had

been prepared for the worst.

'There have definitely been times when I was terrified,' she said.

'I knew when I headed out for this trip that I was going to be testing myself,' she said.

Her mother Maryanne has just given birth to the family's eighth child, whom they named Paul after Paul-Louis Le Moigne, the captain of the French-flagged ship that rescued Abby, Ile De La Reunion.

by Sail-World Cruising roundup

2010 – Keel Failure

Related Press Story

SOURCE <http://www.sailinganarchy.com>

down and out



Marinariello is a Cookson 40 that successfully campaigned the early years of the IMS in the Mediterranean area. Owned by Sergio Galgani and sailed by top Italian sailors such as Tommaso Chieffi, Marinariello sailed nicely for many years. Then she has been sold to another owner in the Adriatic Sea.

Marinariello took the start last September 17th in the coastal race Trieste-San Giovanni in Pelago-Trieste, an event scheduled as the first race of the famous Sailing Week organized by Yacht Club Adriaco in Trieste.

Here is a pic from the [night time start](#) before the race ending with Marinariello capsized due to the keel's loss during a hard beat close to the Croatian port of Umag. - Anarchist Michele.

2010-09-23