

Incident Reports

A summary of reports of known Offshore-related incidents that have occurred since the last meeting.

#	Race / Location	Yacht	LOA	Type	Incident	Outcome
1	Vendée Globe s of Cape Town	PRB	60'	Mono	Structural	Swamped - Abandoned
2	Vendée Globe s of Cape Town	Initiatives Coeur	60'	Mono	Keel collision	Arrived safe in Cape Town
3	Vendée Globe – Bay of Biscay	SeaExplorer	60'	Mono	Collision	Finished with damage
4	ORC Europeans - Naples	Le Pelican	37'	Mono	Collision	Sank-crew rescued
5	RORC Fastnet Race	Jamareeh	40'	Mono	Keel failure	Water ingress-arrived ashore safe

1. Vendée Globe - PRB – IMOCA 60- structural failure

1 December 2020 'PRB' was racing in the southern ocean south of Cape Town, surfed into a wave and suffered severe structural failure. Kevin Escoffier abandoned to the liferaft in few minutes.

Article on the PRB site: <https://sport.prb.fr/en-mer/actus/250-le-recit-de-kevin-escoffier-sur-sa-terrible-avarie-et-son-sauvetage-par-jean-le-cam>

“ THE STORY OF KEVIN ESCOFFIER ON HIS TERRIBLE DAMAGE AND HIS RESCUE BY JEAN LE CAM

Kevin Escoffier phoned his shore crew at 8:00 am this morning and gave an account of his terrible damage and the exceptional rescue by Jean Le Cam last night southwest of the Cape of Good Hope.

KEVIN'S STORY :

"It's surreal what happened. The boat folded back on itself in a 27-knot wave. I heard a crack, but honestly, I didn't need the noise to understand. I looked at the bow, it was at 90°. In a few seconds, there was water everywhere. The back of the boat was under water and the bow was pointing to the sky. The boat broke in two in front of the mast bulkhead. It seemed to fold back. I assure you, I'm not exaggerating... there was a 90° angle between the back and the front of the boat.

I had no time to do anything. I could just send a message to my team "I'm sinking. It's not a joke. MAYDAY".

Between the time I was on deck trimming the sails and the time I was in TPS [survival suit], it didn't even take two minutes. It was extremely fast.

I got out of the boat, put on the TPS (survival suit) as fast as I could. I saw smoke, the electronics burning. Everything was shutting down. The only reflex I had was to grab the phone to send this message and take the TPS that I never put on. I wanted to take the grab bag but I couldn't because the water was rising.

I took the life raft from the stern. The front liferaft (in the cabin) was not accessible, it was already three meters below the water. The water was in the cockpit up to the door.

I would have liked to stay a little longer on board but I could see that everything was going very fast and then I caught a breaker and went into the water with the raft.

At that moment, I was not at all reassured... You are in a raft with 35 knots of wind. No, it's not reassuring. I was only reassured when I saw Jean le Cam. But the problem was how to get on board with him.

We said 2-3 words to each other. It was Verdun on the water. He was forced to move away a little and then afterwards, I saw that he was still on the zone. I stayed in the raft until early morning.

I didn't know if the weather was going to get soft enough to allow for a maneuver. He was 2 meters away from me, he sent me the rope with a clip but it was hard to stop the boat. Finally, I managed to catch a steering tube, a bar to get on board. There was still a sea running, about 3.50 meters. It's an ordeal in these conditions to get on board a 60', especially when you're constrained in your movements by the TPS. Honestly, fortunately I'm in good shape because I assure you it's not easy.

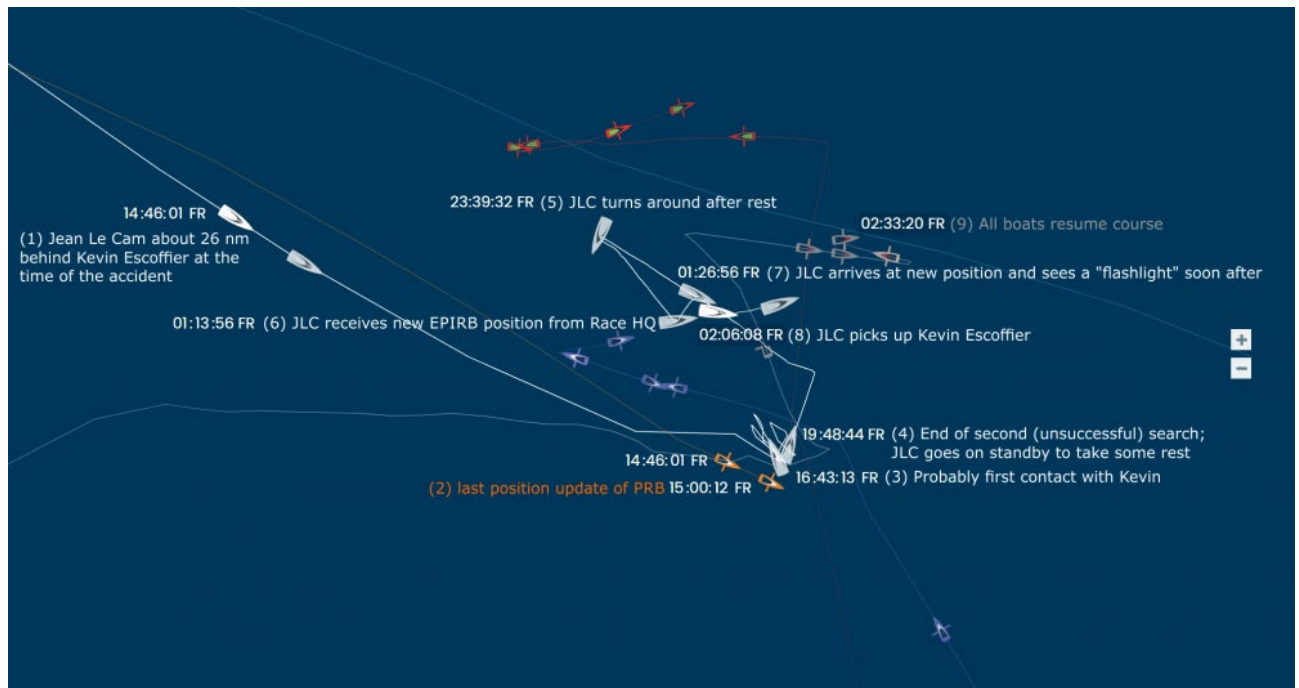
When I found myself on board with Jean, we fell into each other's arms. He said, "F**k, you're on board! It was hot! ». And I said, "F**k your race, you were having a great race". He said, "That's okay, the last time it was me who had put Vincent's race to bed".

At the moment, I have no idea what's next. We will see with the Race Direction. There, I slept well 2 hours, rested, I ate. I did everything I could for the boat. I had reinforced it, I did everything, I have no regrets about what I did. »

Rescue analysis comment:

First of all when JLC saw KE in his life raft he was with two reefs, no head sails and not slow enough. He was close enough to tell KE he was coming back. He lost sight not because he started the engine, but because he had to take another reef. Then he came back 5 times to the site but failed to locate the raft in the decreasing light and huge waves.

He then continued to search, following the instructions from the race war room. At some point during the night CROSS Gris-Nez got a position from a beacon, transmitted to JLC via the race HQ. JLC turned around and went there, but didn't see anything. But a few minutes later he spotted a flash for a few seconds between two waves a mile and 1/2 away. He did follow the light, came very close with the intention of bumping the raft on the windward side, but despite going full reverse on the engine he missed it. With the raft slipping two meters behind the stern he threw the lifesling and its yellow polypro line (that he had prepared when he took the reef) and KE was able to catch it. It then took a lot of effort to bring the raft close enough for KE to climb aboard as the combination of the sea anchors on the life raft and IMOCA 60 'Hubert' drifting at 3 knots was not ideal.



2. Vendée Globe - Initiatives Coeur – IMOCA 60 – keel collision

2 December 2020 'Initiatives Coeur' keel collision, damage to canting keel box, Sam Davies slowly headed to Cape Town.

Having struck something in the water last night Sam Davies this morning is heading out of the worst of the weather and the sea state to further assess the damage to Initiatives Coeur. She spoke to Vendee Globe HQ this morning.

Sam Davies this morning on the audio call, "I was sailing last night I had gybed in the shift in the front, there was 30-35kts of wind for the gybe and that had gone well, and I was happy with where I was. I was sailing on starboard gybe heading east, and obviously the sea state was quite chaotic which it has been for the last two days. And obviously I know I was in these currents and I know these risks are there but I was sailing really nicely, as well as possible given the sea state. So speeds between 15 and 22kts and I was actually just making a hot meal after the gybe and the stack and everything and it was just starting to get dark.

I hit something. I did not see anything. I did not know what it was. It was pretty much dark when it happened. But it was as if I had run aground on a rock at the time. The boatspeed went from 20kts to zero. The boat nosedived on the impact with the keel. I knew it was the keel. I heard a crack coming from there. I and everything else flew forwards, including my dinner which has repainted the entire inside of my boat. Everything moved. I went flying into a ring frame, luckily, because that could have been worse. It was really violent. But luckily I have just hurt some ribs. It is not serious but really painful.

But I stopped the boat, dropped the main, and went to check around the keel, the bearings and the bulkhead. The bulkhead, the main bearing bulkheads (which support the keelbox) are intact as far as I can see. The keelbearings are intact. The longitudinal structure around the keelbox is all cracked. That has taken the shock of the impact of when the boat moved, that is cracked on both sides. The keel ram, because the keel ram goes through the sidewall of the keelbox, that had all moved and there is a watertight seal on the ram and that was knocked off. There was some water coming in but I have a really good immersion pump which I got going really quickly and permanently to keep the water down.

For me the most important thing is to stabilise the boat. It is still is really bad, 30kts of wind, so I have the boat on a course which will minimise all the strains and effort on the keel and the bulkheads. And then I ran a whole lot of checks with my team who mobilised really quickly, the architects and the structural engineers just to check I was not in immediate danger. We did that really and the news was reassuring, they were really confident that I am not in danger unless I sail fast, so there is no bad noise and the keel is still in its bearings and not moving at all.

I cannot sail at any speed, so I am heading slowly towards Cape Town because that is the nearest shelter and we are continuing to assess the damage and what to do with my shore team who are being amazing.”

Analysis showed that modifications to ‘Initiatives Coeur’ keel box structure before the Vendée Globe in line with recommendations circulated by Alex Thomson Racing from the 2019 ‘Hugo Boss’ keel box failure had contained the damage.



3. Vendée Globe - SeaExplorer – IMOCA 60 – collision

27 January 2021 ‘SeaExplorer’ collision at night with fishing vessel

Shortly before the finish of the Vendee Globe Race, things took a dramatic turn for German sailor Boris Herrmann. His vessel, Seaexplorer – Yacht Club de Monaco collided with a fishing trawler 85 nautical miles from the finish line in Les Sables d’Olonne, France. The collision damaged the race yacht, so Herrmann could only continue at a reduced speed. Boris himself was uninjured, and there were no casualties on the fishing trawler either.

“Suddenly I saw a wall next to me, the boats got tangled up, I heard men shouting,” Herrmann reports. His vessel’s bowsprit was broken off, its headsail torn, and the starboard hydrofoil was damaged. Most critically, the starboard shroud broke off, the cable that secures the mast and stops it from falling over. In the hours following the collision, Herrmann worked feverishly to replace the shroud in order to reach his final destination safely.

In a video message, Boris Herrmann recounts the collision that shattered all dreams of a German victory. “I have never experienced anything like this at sea before,” Herrmann said, “but the most important thing is that no one was hurt.”

The collision is another test in the toughest race in the world, but not one that will keep Boris from seeing it through to the end. On Thursday morning, the 39-year-old skipper from Hamburg plans to sail his ship across the finish line off Les Sables d’Olonne, after 81 days at sea. Onshore, his wife Birte, his daughter and his team are already eagerly awaiting his return and proud of his great achievement.

www.yachtsandyachting.co.uk/home-featured/boris-herrmann-chats-to-fishing-boat-captain-about-vendee-globe-collision/

Boris Herrmann has revealed that he has had a phone conversation with the captain of the Spanish fishing trawler that he collided with in the darkness in the closing stages of his Vendée Globe.

Herrmann was just 90 miles from the finish, with a likely second or even first place in the race on the cards, when his hopes – and those of his many supporters – were shattered by the collision.

He suffered serious damage to the boat including to one of the foils. He nursed the boat home at seven knots and missed his podium place.

The fishing boat and Herrmann’s yacht drifted apart in the night, but speaking to the IMOCA class association, Herrmann said he had since spoken to the captain.

“We got on very well,” he said. “We are both working at sea, so we are kind of colleagues.

“I apologised for giving them a stressful moment and they were really deeply sorry for what happened.

“They follow the Vendée Globe – the captain is a Vendée Globe fan – and they were really devastated that we lost places because of it and they were worried about me. They are good people.”



4. ORC Europeans – Le Pelican – Salona 37 – collision, sinking

16 May 2021 'Le Pelican' Salona 37 collision at night with tug boat, crew abandoned to liferaft.

<https://www.sailingscuttlebutt.com/2021/05/16/yacht-sinks-at-start-of-orc-europeans/>

Yacht sinks at start of ORC Europeans

Published on May 16th, 2021

The 66th edition of the Regata dei Tre Golfi got underway May 15 with a record fleet of over 110 boats in what was also the first race of the ORC European Championship. But following the 7:00 pm start for the 150nm course, the Salona 37 Le Pelican (above, #16373) sunk near Ventotene after colliding with a tug boat.

At approximately 02:50 CEST, the incident was reported to the Italian with the crew deploying the life raft and all 7 crew boarded safely. The Italian Navy assisted and pulled the entire crew out of the raft and onto their rescue vessel. All crew were then transferred to Naples. No medical attention was requested by the crew of Le Pelican and all crew were reported in good condition.

Le Pelican was entered in the Tre Golfi in Class C as a participant in the ORC European Championship when they disappeared from tracking screens.

"The conditions were particularly challenging, with two-metre waves, and we were sailing upwind on a port tack," commented a crew member who was on deck at the time of the accident.

"A result of a bad maneuver, in minutes we found ourselves in a critical situation with a cargo barge navigating between Naples and Ventotene just a few metres from us, and at that point a collision was inevitable. We managed to get the life raft into the sea and in just under 3 minutes our boat went under."

Coincidentally, it was the decision of the Organizing Committee to make carrying a life raft on board mandatory, even though this is not a requirement for Category 3 under the World Sailing regulations for safety equipment.

The race course starts off Naples with competitors racing to Ponza before returning to round the Li Galli islets off Positano before crossing the finish line in Capri.

The fleet competing in the ORC European Championship will have until May 17 to complete the offshore race, making their base then in Capri for the second phase of the championship. From May 18 to 20 there are three days of buoy racing with a total of 6 races scheduled, including the offshore to score for the title of ORC European Champion 2021.

www.giornaledellavela.com/2021/05/19/tre-golfi-accident/?lang=en

Fear at the 66th "Tre Golfi" (a 150-mile offshore race along the route Naples – Ponza – Li Galli – Capri). The seven crew members of Filippo Gazzero's Salona 37 Le Pelican (sail number ITA 16373, photo above) had a very hard time of it: at 2.50am on Sunday morning, following a collision with a bettolina (a small boat that transports goods or liquids to larger ships in the port area) between Ventotene and Naples, the boat sank in less than three minutes.

Fortunately, the Organising Committee had decided to make it compulsory to take a self-inflating raft, although this is not required by category 3 of the World Sailing regulations for safety equipment.

After putting the life raft in the water and embarking all 7 crew members, they were immediately taken on board the ship itself, under the control of the Harbour Master – Coast Guard. The entire crew was then transferred to Naples on board the ship, no one was injured.

THE ACCIDENT

The conditions were particularly challenging, with a two-metre wave and we were sailing upwind on the left-hand side," said one of the crew members who was on deck at the time of the accident, "We found ourselves in a critical situation in a few moments, with a small boat sailing between Naples and Ventotene just a few metres away from us, and the impact was inevitable. We managed to get the life raft overboard and see our boat sink in just under three minutes".

On board Le Pelican was the Turin skipper Stefano Gnech, who told Corriere della Sera that the race was supposed to be a training session in preparation for the legendary Fastnet Race, where the close-knit team should participate as the only Italian team. "Four of us ended up in the water," he said, "I went under but managed to cut the sail to resurface, three others were asleep and woke up in the water.

In January, the crew had taken part in safety courses, including a drill that simulated falling into the water while dressed. The experience paid off.

There was no chance of recovering the Salona 37 Le Pelican (11.29 x 3.60m), one of the boats that we also got to know in our TAG Heuer VELA Cup circuit.

It is understood that the Italian Coastguard are conducting an investigation in to the incident.

5. RORC Fastnet Race – Jamareeh – J/120 – keel failure – water ingress

8 August 2021 'Jamareeh' J/120 keel sump cracked, emergency pump deployed, made port safely.

www.bournemouthecho.co.uk/news/19500819.racing-yachts-emergency-call-sparks-lifeboat-response/

Racing yacht's emergency call sparks lifeboat response

By Jason Lewis @JasonDailyEcho

A yacht was taken to Lymington after it suffered a leak during a race from the Isle of Wight to France. The yacht had support by a lifeboat crew following an incident during a race between Cowes and Cherbourg in France. The 40-foot yacht issued a 'pan pan' emergency call during the Fastnet race on Sunday afternoon.

A Swanage RNLI spokesperson said: "The yacht's pumps were initially coping with the water ingress but the situation could worsen very quickly so the lifeboat crew were paged and were soon on their way to the yacht's last known position.

"The yacht had reversed its course and was now heading back towards the Solent but the lifeboat caught up with them just over 30 minutes after launching.

"The yacht's pumps were still coping with the water ingress so the lifeboat agreed to escort them in to the Solent where the plan was to hand over the escort to Lymington lifeboat once they were nearer to Lymington.

"Unfortunately the plan had to change quickly as the water ingress suddenly got worse as the boats approached Lymington river.

"The lifeboat's powerful portable salvage pump and two crew were quickly put aboard and the water ingress was stabilised.

"The yacht was then taken to a boat yard for an emergency lift to get it out of the water. Once the yacht was lifted clear of the water the damage to the yacht's keel was obvious."



