RORC Incident Report - Fujin (USA5301) Capsize
2018 RORC Caribbean 600 Race

Vessel Details
- Capsized sailing vessel identified as Fujin (USA5301) – Beiker 53 catamaran, silver in colour with 8 persons on board.
- Sailing vessel Varuna (GER7111) identified as ‘standing-by’ – a Kerr 56 monohull, black in colour with 16 persons on board.
- Sailing vessel Flow (USA61002) identified as ‘standing-by’ – a Gunboat 60 catamaran, silver in colour with 10 persons on board.

Incident Time and Location
- Fujin (USA5301) capsized and subsequently inverted at approximately 2050hrs (AST – Atlantic Standard Time / Atlantic Time, Monday 19th February 2018.
- Approximate location of the incident as at 2050hrs (AST) was 17° 31.243N, 063° 12.289W 2-3nm south/south west of Saba (Dutch Caribbean).
- Last known tracking report from Fujin was at 2200hrs (AST) at 17° 37.030N, 063° 15.900W approximately 0.45nm from Saba.

Facts Found
- Fujin (USA5301) capsized and subsequently inverted at approximately 2050hrs (AST – Atlantic Standard Time / Atlantic Time, Monday 19th February 2018.
- Fujin crew after the incident have identified very strong and heavy gusts in the vicinity of Saba as the primary cause of the capsize. Other vessels have also identified similar conditions in the vicinity of Saba.
- 4 personal AIS beacons from crew abroad Fujin were subsequently activated once the vessel had capsized and the crew were in the water.
- All 8 crew were able to safely extricate themselves from the upturned vessel and climb on top of the hull.
- At approximately 2050hrs both Varuna & Flow received multiple AIS transmissions originating from the one location.
- Varuna and Flow have both identified receiving MOB AIS transmissions on their boat systems but given the nature of these systems weren’t able to accurately identify the vessel requiring assistance.
- Varuna, a number miles further north, made themselves ready and turned around to stand-by.
- ‘Flow’, who were a number miles behind Fujin, continued sailing to the approximate location to stand-by.
• At approximately 2055hrs MRCC Fort de France was notified of the AIS beacon activations in the Saba area and were able, through VHF relay stations, to maintain contact with both vessels standing-by.

• Fujin crew after the incident have made it known that they had no way of communicating with any other vessels or emergency authorities after losing their emergency grab bag. All vessel electrics and communications equipment was rendered unusable after the capsize.

• At 2110hrs MRCC Fort de France made contact with the RORC Race Management Team via the emergency phone.

• RORC Race Management were able to ascertain by conversations with MRCC Fort de France that all crew aboard Fujin left the vessel safely and were on top of the upturned hull, with Varuna and Flow standing-by.

• 2115hrs the Race Management Team made their way to the Race Office at Antigua Yacht Club and began to ready the necessary vessel paper work for Fujin (boat/vessel information, crew list and NOK details, EPIRB Hex ID's and beacon numbers, liferaft information)

• At 2230hrs the Race Management Team engaged the help of local French speaker (Susan Wynn) to ensure all information from MRCC was accurate and ensure MRCC Fort de France had accurate English language going forward.

• Susan Wynn on contact with MRCC Fort de France verified that all crew were safe and that a local fishing/ dive vessel in the Saba vicinity had been engaged in the rescue. The Race Management Team were also informed at this time that Varuna and Flow had been released from any further ongoing involvement in the rescue. Both vessels continued to race.

• At 0130hrs (20 February) MRCC Fort de France confirmed that all crew were safely aboard the dive/ fishing vessel tasked with the rescue and were now making arrangement for the recovery of the vessel.

• At 0630hrs MRCC Fort de France confirmed that the crew of Fujin were still aboard the fishing/ dive vessel as rough weather hadn’t allowed them to enter Port Saba.

• At 0943 MRCC Fort de France confirmed that the crew of Fujin were safely on dry land at Saba and making arrangement to return to Antigua. The vessel although upturned was secured to a mooring outside the harbour.

• All 8 crew of Fujin landed safely in Antigua at 1730hrs 20 February 2018.
• Flow retired from the race on Wednesday 21 February.
• Varuna finished the race and subsequently applied for redress with the events International Jury.
• Fujin crew received no injuries and received no medical treatment from emergency services.

**Actions Taken**

• Fujin and its crew had made preparations (by heavily reducing sail area) for the unpredictable wind in the vicinity of Saba.

• After the capsize occurred a number of crew activated their ‘man-overboard’ AIS beacons which were subsequently picked up by other competitors and MRCC Fort de France.
• After all vessel electrics and communications equipment were rendered unusable the crew of Fujin attempted to retrieve the emergency grab bag (containing VHF radio). This grab bag was lost (floated away or sank) while exiting the vessel.
• Varuna and Flow having received multiple AIS distress signals made preparations to stand-by Fujin.
• Under the coordination of MRCC Fort de France a rescue of the crew of Fujin was initiated.
• The crew of Fujin were successfully rescued by a contracted commercial vessel from Saba.
• After the crew of Fujin were successfully rescued the vessel was towed to a mooring outside Saba harbour where salvage operations were to be organised.

Summary
• The crew of Fujin have identified that both prior to the race and during the race correct actions were taken by the skipper and his crew, this included but was not limited to; safety briefings prior to the race with the crew covering topics such as capsizes and serious issues, heavily reducing sail area when the weather was unpredictable or volatile (as is the case in the area south/south-west Saba) and the procedure for activating rescue beacon in times of distress (after the capsise of the vessel).
• It was noted that greater attention should be paid to both the attachment location and the method of tethering/ securing emergency grab bags in catamarans/trimarans, should an inversion or capsise happen.
• RORC Race Team due to the nature of the incident were unable to communicate with the crew of Fujin directly and relied on communication through the coordinating rescue authority MRCC Fort de France. Language difficulties with MRCC Fort de France were immediately noted as of primary concern at the time of the incident however were resolved with a local French speaker. RORC in the future will identify prior to the start of the race a suitable translator.
• Varuna and Flow having received AIS beacon activity acted accordingly and in a seamanlike manner in standing-by and helping with radio communications. Both vessels were able to continue racing once no longer required by rescue authorities.
• The RORC response to the incident was in line with the club’s crisis/ emergency management plan and effectively resolved within a timely manner.

Chris Stone
Racing Manager
Royal Ocean Racing Club
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