Oceanic / Offshore Race Incidents
from September 2008 - August 2009

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 simply the collection of some press articles to form this yearly supporting paper.

2008 - Sydney – Hobart

Secretariat Summary: The Sydney Hobart had a number of incidents however the most significant was the loss of the Farr 53 Georgia which was caused by Rudder failure.

Related Press Story


For those in peril on the sea, it would be comforting to know that people like Leo Rodriguez and his “motley” crew aboard Telcoinabox Merit are at hand - and when Georgia lost its rudder and began sinking on night one of the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race off Batemans Bay, Telcoinabox Merit, a Volvo 60, was two miles in front of her, with seven commercial skippers aboard.

Now based at Airlie Beach in Queensland, the Volvo 60 had aboard veterans of 15 years in the charter business in the Whitsundays who are right up to speed on survival at sea training, including skipper Leo Rodriguez, who had just completed a refresher course as he prepared for this year’s race.

Telcoinabox Merit was ahead of John Williams and Graeme Ainley’s Victorian Farr 53 Georgia, romping along under spinnaker in 25 knots of wind, and 18th in the fleet of 100.

“We heard Georgia call JBW (the radio relay vessel) for help then we were asked by JBW to attend because we were the nearest vessel,” he recalled today on Telcoinabox Merit’s arrival in Hobart.

“We were two miles in front so we had to motor back to the position of the boat. We told them that we were 35 minutes away but they were concerned that 35 minutes might be too long. When we got there the boat was in a pretty bad state. There wasn’t much time left “

Rodriguez said that when they reached Georgia they asked the crew to board their life rafts, seven at a time.

“When we arrived, the nav (navigation) lights were about two inches from the surface of the water, so there wasn’t much time left at all.
“They (the crew) had been in waist deep water for quite a while so my main concern was to get them on board and get them warm and get them down below and make sure no-one was hurt in any way.”

They completed the rescue by using Georgia’s life raft in two ferrying operations. A stern line was attached to Georgia and a bow line to Telcoinabox Merit. When the final crew member was in the raft, they cut the stern line and were hauled aboard Merit.

“We got them on board pretty much without a hitch,” he said, “They were pretty glad we were there. There was no chaos.

“Basically, the boat rolled over about 10 minutes after we got them all off the boat. It didn’t take long at all. It still had the mainsail up when it rolled. The nav lights and stern lights were still on below the surface.

“They were very thankful that we were there; very thankful that we answered their call.”

Rodriguez said there were closer boats but they did not get the call. “We didn’t think we were the closest boat. We were the ones that responded and we were the ones that could take them safely, so we did.

“The beauty with our boat is that we have seven commercial skippers on board so we’ve all done it before, done our sea survival courses. I personally did the sea survival course, just as a refresher. Things like that always help.”

After the rescue, Telcoinabox Merit took their passengers inshore towards Batemans Bay where the police boat Nemesis had said conditions would be calmer and where they could be offloaded into a RIB.

Cruising Yacht Club of Australia Commodore Matt Allen, on behalf of the crew of Georgia, personally thanked the Telcoinabox crew and handed over an ample gift of refreshments.

“Thank you and your crew for your assistance in what was a very important time for them,” Allen said.

Telcoinabox Merit has lodged claims for eight to nine hours redress, since; when they rejoined the fleet they were in 73rd place and sailing in far less favourable conditions.

They finished in 28th place and the International Jury is currently hearing the request for redress.

Chris Welsh’s USA based Spencer 65 Ragtime observed the distress flare from Georgia and was asked by the race committee to proceed to their location.

Ragtime remained on standby and this afternoon was awarded 115 minutes redress and the crew commended for their action.

With redress, Ragtime is currently 11th overall on the IRC handicap pointscore.

Official race website: www.rolexsydneyhobart.com
Nico Budel Rescued
At 11:45GMT today there was a dramatic rescue deep in the South Indian Ocean. The 17,000 tonne bulk carrier CSK Radiance, having been diverted earlier in the week at the request of MRCC (Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre) Reunion, located the stricken yacht Hayai with skipper Nico Budel on board and effected a flawless mid-ocean rescue. Budel, a 69 year old grandfather of five was racing the second leg of the Portimao Global Ocean Race when the lead bulb of his keel separated from the keel fin. While the bulb was still attached at the time of the rescue, and the boat was upright, the danger of the bulb coming loose and the boat capsizing was imminent. For the last three days Budel has been sailing north out of the Southern Ocean in an attempt to avoid violent storms that are forecast for the area. On Sunday night Hayai experienced storm force winds of 62 knots while Nico prepared to abandon ship.

"The conditions for rescue were not ideal," said Race Director Josh Hall who along with MRCC Reunion, race assistant Alan Green, and the Captain of the CSK Radiance coordinated the rescue. "There was a seven metre swell running and a moderate wind of around 20 knots making it difficult to manoeuvre a ship the size of CSK Radiance alongside a small yacht. Clearly Captain Singson and his crew are highly experienced seamen and we thank them profusely for not only diverting to help Nico, but also for their skill and determination in pulling off a successful operation."

"I was very worried that the boat was going to capsize at any time," Budel said in a satellite phone call from on board CSK Radiance. "I have been on deck for the last two days in my survival suit as I did not want to be trapped below. It has been a very emotional time but I am happy to be saved and grateful to Captain Singson and his crew. They have been very welcoming. Before I left the boat I opened up the seacocks and there was already a lot of water around the keel. I am sure that it will sink in a few hours." The tracking device on board Hayai continues to send position reports and will do so until the boat goes down. Scuttling the boat is a prudent course of action to ensure that Hayai does not present any danger to maritime traffic.
2008 – 2009 Volvo Ocean Race

Secretariat Summary: For the second time the Volvo Ocean Race competed in the Volvo 70 class with less incident and significant structural failure. However the strong upwind conditions on the leg from Singapore to Qingdao left Delta Lloyd and Telefoncia Black missing legs.

Green Dragon - Boom Failure
Puma - Boom Failure
Delta Lloyd - Keel Ram Failure
Delta Lloyd - Structural Failure (Missed a Leg because of Damage)
Ericsson 3 - Structural Failure (An extensive rebuild mid leg in Taiwan?)
Telefoncia Black - Structural Failure (Missed a Leg because of Damage)
Puma - Rudder Blade Loss
Telefoncia Blue - Grounding (Damage to Keel and Daggerboard and associated hull structure)
Farallones Race from San Francisco J80

On the 2 handed Farallones race from San Francisco a J80 lost it's keel - the two crew were rescued. See their posts below from Sailing Anarchy

POST Skipper
Yes we're both very glad we are ok. It was a very scary experience and I don't wish it on anyone. I was amazed when my buddy (Dave Wilhite) dove under the overturned boat to recover our VHF radio from a sheet bag. That's what saved our lives for sure. I think I spent about an hour trying to stand on top of the boat leaning against the rudder talking to the coast guard on the VHF and holding a flashlight over my head. To answer some of your questions –

The keel did fall off. We were going really fast down a very large wave with a reefed main and the jib. All of a sudden I had no helm and the boat turned 90 degrees (very weird thing to have happen when you are going fast and actually a little low - i didn't feel i was in danger of wiping out at that angle and speed at all, we had been doing it for hours). The boat turned 90 very quickly and the wave we were riding broke over us and rolled the boat. At the beginning of the roll we heard what sounded like a tree cracking and falling down. That would have been the keel falling clean off. We were left in the water, tethered to the jack lines under the boat. We ended up cutting our teathers so we didn't get dragged under.

About an hour later and lots of talking on the radio, 2 coast guard boats, a pilot boat and a helicopter all found us at the same time. They tossed us a line and I got my buddy off the boat as he was much colder than me due to the fact that he had been in the water the whole time while I was standing on the boat (though I think i got washed off the boat about 50 times). Then another coast guard boat told me to swim to them so I did.

Neither of us have any serious injuries, just lots of bruises and pretty sore bodies. The coast guard did a great job of finding us and getting us to safety, lots of thanks go out to them.

-David Servais.

POST Co-skipper

really cool to hear all the ideas flow. thanks for all the positive comments. some seem really plausible others kind of make me chuckle. i kind of feel like personal epirb's are a cool idea. the strobe on DS's harness didn't go off but that seems to not have effected the outcome and his night vision was maintained. i really like the idea of having a ditch bag in the back of the cockpit given our situation the back of the boat was moving up and down a lot in the waves. the only reason i didn't get up on the boat was because david was already there and all i could do was make his situation worse. there was simply on room at the in. i really like the idea of twin rudder boats now! kind of kid! ding on that.
The moores were a better boat in the condition although i get that the 80 was doing anything unreasonable george olson really hit a sweet spot with that boat in big weather. that, and i haven't been sailing all that much for the last four years, not like the old days and even then there are tons of guys that were and probably still are. i'd be lying if i didn't say that the 80 isn't perfected in a design sense. the boat balances well gets up to speed and i do like the sport boat concept. i don't like the fact that the keel left us.

back to thinking about feelings as we sat out on the edge of the middle of nowhere there didn't seem anything else to do but do a few things to get someone's attention.

without a doubt to sit 8 miles offshore in twelve foot breaking waves and 30kt winds on peter's upturned sailboat wasn't a good feeling. i really didn't know if, and fact had fairl major doubt we would get back... so surreal to see! t he waxing crescent of the moon in one direction and the lights of san francisco in the other; each seeming equally hard reach.

considering the resources available it's amazing we were found. we had a rough idea about where we were but i think the gps cords would have been nice. in retrospect that was doable and would have made things better for all involved... but things worked out so only something to carry forward if we needed to ad a part of the puzzle.

it's also amazing is how hard it is to get anything done.

I'm still not a believer in auto inflate nor foam jackets. i figure if i'm out i'm out tough to come back from a big knock on the head. I also found that the less energy expended the better off i was.... just knowing the radio was working and that we had contact made it easy to stay positive. i can only imagine how long david and i would have lasted with little hope of rescue being it all black and da rk and totally tossed aro! und. I knew when to inflate my harness and trusted it would work because i had tested it days before.

we only had one real chance to have a positive outcome and it came to us. just as easily things could have gone the other way.

to give an idea of the things that saved us.
concept of our surroundings
methodical practice to attain our goal, (even if dave used a little extra radio "motivation" during his transmissions.)
no cotton, all tech clothing
harness on and tether-able
not boots but tech shoes that didn't hold water. I had gortex socks which rock. david and i were able to easily swim over to our respective rescue boats with just a little kicking
$100 waterproof portable vhf radio (the uniden 100 is on my list of must haves and i'm an icom guy)
$7 palm size gerity focused LED flashlight. (small, powerful enough and long lived)
$9 REI pocket knife
is there more anybody needs? absolutely yes; flares come to mind. however, i do feel that if anything had gone wrong we were toast. no way was i swimming into the cabin for stuff. conversely even if you have a bunch of stuff strapped to yourself success is still far from assured and you aren't nearly as mobile or agile if your weighted down it a bag of teathered tools. tangle, tools selection and need???

there's more but i'll let people riff on this stuff for awhile.

i don't think anybody is going to be good on a monohull capsize unless the monohull is designed to be serviceable in that state...
**Vendee Globe 2008/2009 - Damage Roll Call**

The route of the Vendee Globe 2008/9 has taken its toll on 19 of the 30 original entries that started on November 9, 2008 at Les Sables d'Olonne, France. Aside from Vincent Rou's dismasting due to damage incurred during his rescue of Jean Le Cam, there were five other broken rigs. Problems with rudders were next on the list (4), and through all the failures, two boats were abandoned. Here is what happened to the 19 skippers no longer in the race:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boat</th>
<th>Failure</th>
<th>Technical Causes</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kito De Pavant (FRA), Groupe Bel</td>
<td>Broke mast, boom, carbon deck spreader</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marc Thiercelin (FRA), DCNS</td>
<td>Broke mast</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yannick Bestaven (FRA), Energies Autour du Monde</td>
<td>Broke mast</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex Thomson (UK), Hugo Boss</td>
<td>Hull crack and delamination</td>
<td>Damage due to collision with fishing boat before the start and then insufficient repairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jérémie Beyou (FRA), Delta Dore</td>
<td>Breakage of spreader attachment</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unai Basurko (ESP), Pakea Bizkai</td>
<td>Breakage of starboard rudder</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominique Wavre (SUI), Temenos II</td>
<td>Broke keel head</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernard Stamm (SUI), Cheminées Poujoulat</td>
<td>Problems with the rudder. Beached in the Kerguelen Isles</td>
<td>Diverse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loick Peyron (FRA), Gitana Eighty</td>
<td>Dismasting in the Indian Ocean (Classic mast with articulated spreader)</td>
<td>Probably excessive tension on the boom vang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean-Baptiste Dejeanty (FRA), Maisonneuve</td>
<td>Autopilot, sails and Electronic</td>
<td>Diverse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Golding (UK), Ecover</td>
<td>Dismasted South of Australia</td>
<td>Broach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yann Eliès (FRA), Generali</td>
<td>Broke leg, abandoned boat.</td>
<td>Suddenly slowed on hitting a wave with impact against the pushpit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sébastien Josse (FRA), BT</td>
<td>Port rudder broken and multiple failures</td>
<td>Knockdown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derek Hatfield (CAN), Spirit of Canada</td>
<td>Breakage of two port spreader (Classic Mast)</td>
<td>Mast In Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean-Pierre Dick (FRA),</td>
<td>Damaged rudder</td>
<td>Collision with an</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Victim(s)</td>
<td>Date/Time</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mainsail damage</td>
<td>Jonny Malbon (FRA), Artemis</td>
<td>Jan. 04. 2009 at 10:00 UT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of bulb and irreversible capsize (Boat abandoned)</td>
<td>Jean Le Cam (FRA), VM Matériaux</td>
<td>Jan. 06. 2009 at 18:10 UT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dismasting</td>
<td>Vincent Rou (FRA), PRB</td>
<td>Jan. 07. 2009 at 19:20 UT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keel sheared off right at hull level</td>
<td>Roland Jourdain (FRA), Veolia Environnement</td>
<td>Feb. 02. 2009 at 13:00 UT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keel sheared off right at hull level</td>
<td>Marc Guillemot Safran (Actually Finished the Race)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Keel rams</td>
<td>Brian Thompson (GBR), Bahrain Team Pindar</td>
<td></td>
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Source: Barcelona World race – Duo magazine
2009 - Baltic Sprint Cup

Source dailysail.com
Female skipper lost overboard Search and rescue mission mounted to find Sabine Juettner-Storp, competing in the Baltic Sprint Cup
On Monday there was a dramatic emergency in the offshore regatta Baltic Sprint Cup.

During the race’s second leg from Rønne on the island of Bornholm/Denmark to Vaestervik in Sweden, the female skipper of the German yacht DHH Cross-Match, Sabine Juettner-Storp, fell overboard. A search and rescue was immediately instigated, coordinated by the Danish SAR rescue centre. In addition to a Swedish rescue helicopter and two rescue boats, 15 other yachts from the regatta fleet took part in the search, but without success when darkness fell.

The second leg of this race had started in medium to fresh WSWerly winds on Monday afternoon. At the time of the incident, the sea state to the northeast of the Danish island of Bornholm was moderate with waves of a 0.5m height.

The 12m long X-40 DHH Cross-Match is part of the regatta group of the Deutscher Hochseesportverband Hansa (DHH) from Gluecksburg, Germany, and the fleet's only yacht with an all-female crew comprising six experienced sailors. The emergency call was received by the Maritime Rescue Sub Centre on the island of Bornholm, a sub-division of the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre JRCC Denmark. The accident is said to be the result of a tragic series of unfortunate events, when the skipper had been attempting to unravel headsail wrapped around the forestay. All efforts to locate Luebeck-born Sabine Juettner-Stork after her fall overboard have failed so far. The 54-year old is known for her calmness and many years of experience. After successfully crossing the Atlantic in 2007, it was her second Baltic Sprint Cup.

“The entire race community is deeply shocked”, said event manager Henning Rocholl from Hamburg, Germany and Race Director Alan Green. This leg, the second of five has been abandoned by the race committee.

This year’s race is the fifth running of the Baltic Sprint Cup. The race was started on Saturday (18 July) in Warnemuende, Germany, and will lead 930 nautical miles across the Baltic Sea with stopovers in Latvia and Poland to follow. The yachts are expected to cross the finish line on 31 July in Travemuende, Germany as the final destination. Three of the 33 yachts of the fleet are from abroad, 30 flying the German flag.
2009 - Transquadra Race

Lost Ocean Racing - Source Sailing Anarchy

On Monday, February 9 at 12 pm GMT, the crew of Avel (Francis and Patrick Van Eetvelde Bevernaege) climbed aboard the First 31.7 Xenon after being asked by the race director of the Transquadra Race. They found that the skipper of Xenon, Hautbois Jean-Marc, was not on board.

They just found a harness to half-mast and a shoe dropped on the forward deck. Xenon was sailing under genoa alone, with a broken boom and the main sail lowered. Jean-Marc Hautbois, 55, a physical education teacher in Gap (Hautes Alpes), participated in the Transquadra (race for solo and double crews reserved for sailors of over 40 years of age). He left on January 24 from Porto Santo (Madeira) heading for Cape Le Marin on Martinique.

On 7th of February, Mico Bolo, Race Director of the Transquadra, found via the Argos system that the boat of Jean-Marc Hautbois had suddenly changed course and speed, 760 miles east of Martinique. The skipper of the boat Xenon had previously announced to the organizers his intention to climb the mast. The race director said that Jean-Marc has been missing since, until the crew of the sailboat Avel discovered this morning the vessel without any occupant.

02/11/09