



J122 Alliance – 2024 Newport Bermuda Race
Lost June 23 due to flooding

S/V Alliance



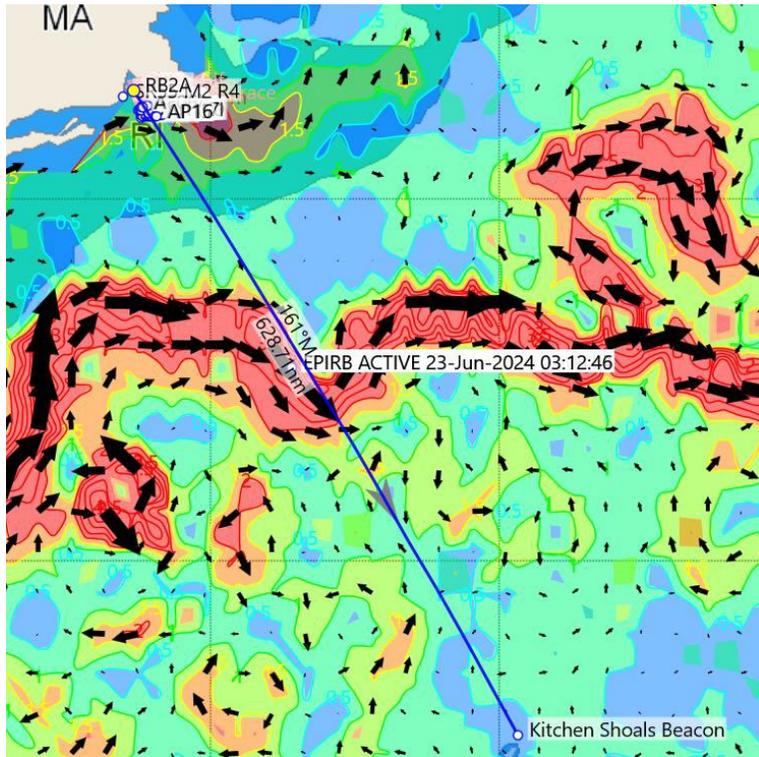
- J122 with crew of 9
- Second Newport Bermuda Race
- Well prepared and experienced
- Crew had sailed >1,000 NM offshore as a team

Conditions

- **4 persons on deck tethered with lifejackets with 5 below sleeping**
- **Nearly full moon**
- **5 hours into the Gulf Stream with 4 knots favorable current**
- **18-20 kts of wind out of the SW with TWA about 80-90**
- **One reef with medium/heavy jib**
- **6 ft seas, making 8 kts through the water and 12kts over ground**
- **Rotating helmsperson every 30 to 40 minutes to minimize fatigue**
- **Conditions were not excessively challenging**

The Unexpected

Collision with unidentified submerged object – Catastrophic damage and flooding



250 NM offshore



Timeline

1 hour & 20 minutes

- **0248 - Loud metallic noise, “all hands on deck” and “hove to”**
- **0250 - Damage assessment - Catastrophic steering system damage and flooding, distinct burning smell**
- **0251 – Distress calls: DSC, then verbal Mayday, followed by EPIRB, call to Race Communications using Iridium satphone**
- **0255 - 1K GPH electric pump followed by 3.7K GPH 10 mins later**
- **0310 - Water level continued to rise**
- **0330 – S/V Ceilidh followed by S/V Banter in visual proximity**
- **0340 - Execute abandoned ship procedure**
- **0406 - Life raft transfer completed to S/V Ceilidh**
- **0530 – Alliance sinks**

Critical Decisions – Skipper’s words

- **“May Day” call - resulted in swift response (sent DSC, then verbal, then satcom call to race communications watch)**
- **Stabilized boat - prevented compounding issues**
- **Damage Control actions - bought us time**
- **Prepare to abandon ship actions - got us organized**
- **Decision to abandon ship - continued rising water level and two boats in close visual proximity**

Preparations Supporting Success

- **Extensive preparations over the winter**
 - **Absolute confidence in both the boat and the team!**
- **Extensive crew preparations 6 months of monthly team zooms**
 - **Standing Plans**
 - **Emergency procedures**
 - **Homework**
- **Crew offshore experience on Alliance**
 - **8 of 9 crew current SaS training**
- **Watch Captains independently performed safety inspection**
- **Overnight work up race - Sam Wetherill Race**
- **Contact info and call response for primary family POC**
- **Carrying two emergency dewatering pumps – more than 4K GPH**
- **Collision mat aboard but not useful in this case**

“We don’t rise to the level of our expectations, we fall to the level of our training.”-

Life Raft Transfer



- **In 20kts, wind blown forces and sea state can be a challenge!**
- **Winslow 10 person ultra lite. Hopped in...hopped out...took two to hold life raft ladder to get all in...remember the drogue! Raft was pulled the last 50 feet with a winch over to the rescue boat.**
- **Ditch bag contained passports, contact info, personal medicines, plus other normal needed material**
- **Took 3x3 gallons of emergency water plus snack bag**
- **Time to grab cell phones, boat computer, car keys...put in big dry bag**
- **Took spare life jacket plus foul weather gear**
- **Turned on as many lights possible to make Alliance stand out**

The rescue boat(s)

- **Communications – supported boat is dealing with the casualty. Rescue boat must handle communications and on scene coordination of rescue efforts (on scene coordinator).**
- **Understand water and food aboard. Communicate what support you need from other boats. Who is on scene coordinator?**
- **Buddy boat needs? S/V Banter escorted S/V Ceilidh to Bermuda**
- **Gulf stream factors - sea state, 6 ft seas, 4+ kts of current. Nighttime... fortunately moon light and spotlights**
- **Protecting sharp edges and life raft puncture mitigation**
- **Getting to the scene promptly and not compounding the casualty**
- **Safely conducting life raft transfer**
- **Rescue boat stress with 9 additional aboard**
- **Rescue boat decision to continue racing – Alliance crew could do nothing to help operate the rescue boat.**
- **Life with crew of 7 becoming 16 for 52 additional hours**

Overall considerations

- **Clear command, control and communications...to the crew and externally to others**
- **Race work up team development given crew location proximity and time constraints**
- **Readiness - Storm Trysail Club online material, US Sailing incidents, and other SAS online content extremely useful if utilized and discussed as a team**
- **Alliance Standing Plans - provided the foundational basis for duties and responsibilities, command and control, philosophy plus emergency procedures. Was a framework to establish a solid foundation for success.**
- **Well balanced team - Experience plus developing youthful energetic offshore sailors. 4 over 55 plus 5 under 35.**
- **The two under 35 yr old Watch Captains able to hold lift raft steady to get aboard and directed actions required for success.**
- **Additional items to Ditch bag - rearming kits for PFD, cell phones in a dry bag, consider adding emergency toothbrushes to Ditch Bag 😊**
- **What to do with the life raft after???? BOAT'S NAME STENCILED ON RAFT!!!**
- **How to warn other racing vessels about a hazard...sinking boat and drifting lift raft.**

BOAT'S NAME STENCILED ON RAFT!!!

Satellite communications lessons learned

2024 Newport Bermuda Race

- Race committee initiated 48 calls to boats regarding safety issues. Only 4 were answered.
- 34 boats in the immediate vicinity of incidents were called. NONE answered the first time.
- 35 Compliance calls were made. 9 were answered.

Overall outgoing calls always went through. **Incoming calls were generally not answered.** Very few of those unanswered calls were due to connectivity or equipment issues.

Hmmmm.....

(1) use EPIRB with AIS, (2) shoot SOLAS parachute flares, (3) is your VHF and your SATCOM audible in the cockpit with the wind blowing?