



Brian Corlin/Volvo Ocean Race

Rescue - made possible by Inmarsat

Team Vestas Wind, Volvo Ocean Race 2014-15
Cargados Carajos Reef, Indian Ocean



Author: Sanchez/Novo Ocean Race

Made possible by Inmarsat

Inmarsat is official Satellite Communications Partner for the Volvo Ocean Race 2014-15. For a fourth consecutive edition, we are delivering cutting-edge safety services, vessel tracking capabilities, audio and video communications and social media access throughout this most extreme of sporting events.

The Volvo Ocean 65 race boats are equipped with Inmarsat's flagship maritime services - FleetBroadband 500 (FB500), FleetBroadband 250 (FB250) and Inmarsat C for safety - and carry our latest satellite phone, IsatPhone 2, in their life raft packs.

Each boat's Onboard Reporter (OBR) relies on FleetBroadband to deliver the dramatic story of the race to millions of fans around the world as the crews circumnavigate the globe, covering 38,739 nautical miles.

Inmarsat is also sponsoring the OBR Awards, which offers a major cash prize to the OBR judged to have produced the most compelling content across the race. The prize is awarded at the race end in Gothenburg, Sweden in June 2015



When Volvo Ocean Race competitors Team Vestas Wind faced disaster in the Indian Ocean, Inmarsat satellite connectivity helped secure their safe rescue from a shark-infested reef.

Key facts

- 1** Inmarsat is official Satellite Communications Partner for the Volvo Ocean Race 2014-15
- 2** 29 November 2014, Team Vestas Wind ran aground on the Cargados Carajos reef in the Indian Ocean
- 3** All crew safely evacuated into a life raft eight hours after they ran aground
- 4** Crew spent 48 hours shipwrecked before their rescue back to Mauritius
- 5** Inmarsat is the only satellite communications provider that meets the high safety standards of the GMDSS with 99.9% availability

'I knew I had to get this footage off the boat immediately because if we didn't survive at least someone would have it and if we did survive it was going to make a pretty good news story.'

The words of Onboard Reporter Brian Carlin, describing his reaction to the grounding of Team Vestas Wind's boat, capture the professionalism demonstrated by the entire crew when disaster struck during Leg 2 of the Volvo Ocean Race 2014-15.

The Volvo Ocean 65 ploughed into the Cargados Carajos reef in the Indian Ocean, causing severe damage to the boat, although luckily the crew remained unharmed.

Despite being thrown across the deck by the impact and blacking out momentarily, seasoned sailing photographer and videographer Carlin hit the crash record button that ensures the previous four minutes and subsequent four minutes filmed on one of the onboard video cameras are recorded and uploaded via FleetBroadband 500 to race HQ.

Having donned his survival suit, he then got himself to the below-deck media desk, which is the control hub for all content coming off the boat, and reported to camera as water swirled around his legs and his team mates fought to get the stricken vessel off the rocks.

After clinging on for eight desperate hours through the night as waves repeatedly smashed the boat onto the rocks, skipper Chris 'Nico' Nicholson made the tough decision to evacuate the team into the shark-infested shoals. All the crew safely got away in the boat's life raft before being picked up by a local coastguard speedboat and taken to the almost deserted Ile du Sud.



IsatPhone 2 lifeline

While waiting to be picked up by a supply vessel from Mauritius, which makes the 860 km (534 mile) round trip once a week, Nicholson spoke to Volvo Ocean Race Control on the IsatPhone 2 satellite phone, stowed in the life raft for just such an emergency.

IsatPhone 2 is designed to cope with the toughest conditions. A rugged handset, unrivalled battery life offering eight hours' talk time and up to 160 hours on standby, and the excellent voice clarity and call stability provided by the I-4 global satellite network make it a vital component of an emergency pack.

'It's been a lifesaver,' said Nicholson of the satellite phone. 'We quickly sustained so much damage with flooding that we lost all electrical supply, we lost onboard phones, so we had to get the IsatPhone 2 out of the grab bag.'

The communications lifeline meant the team could keep in touch with their shore-side team and reassure their worried families. Using a solar panel to recharge the phone on their shipwrecked island, they waited 48 hours to be ferried back to Mauritius with all the kit they were able to strip from the abandoned race boat, including the satellite antennas.

Safety is a vital component of the Volvo Ocean Race, which pits competitors against the full might of nature over nine gruelling months. In one of the world's most dangerous and isolated sports, the need to be prepared for the worst is crucial to the wellbeing of the competing teams.



Reliable communications

As soon as news of the incident broke, Inmarsat dispatched three additional IsatPhone 2 phones and a Cobham SATCOM EXPLORER 710 BGAN terminal to Mauritius to make it easier for the crew to call home and to ensure the team and race organisers could get the latest video on the story out to the world's media.

With unreliable terrestrial connectivity in Mauritius, Inmarsat's land-based BGAN service provided crucial access to fast, reliable, global voice and broadband data satellite communications from a lightweight and easy to use terminal.

Referring to the importance of satellite connectivity when disaster struck, Nicholson said: 'You think you're well-trained on these things but it's different in the heat of the moment. It sort of paves the way in regards to being able to keep informed the people who need to be informed and giving both me and the crew reassurances that there were more people out there than just us dealing with the situation.'

Despite the extensive damage to the yacht, Team Vestas Wind has announced bold plans to rebuild their boat and attempt to return to the Volvo Ocean Race in time for the Lisbon stopover and Leg 8 race start in June.



About Inmarsat

Inmarsat was set up over 35 years ago to be the satellite cornerstone of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS), which ensures rapid, automated alerts can be sent to rescue authorities when a vessel is in danger.

We are the only satellite communications provider that meets the high safety standards of the GMDSS with 99.9% availability of our satellite and ground network.

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