



LOGBOOK

Tuesday 1st February 2011

ROUGH, CHAOTIC SEAS!

THE INFAMOUS AGULHAS BANK

A TWO HOUR WATCH SYSTEM

RANKING: 6th

WEATHER: High pressure system with heavy rain and violent squalls

WIND: South-westerly, 12 knots

BOAT SPEED: 9 knots, heading 70°

MENU:

Breakfast: Raspberry porridge

Meal n°1: Beef with potatoes and hazelnut pudding

Meal n°2: Salmon and vanilla rice pudding

ROUGH, CHAOTIC SEAS!



The first attempt to talk to Mirabaud:

- Hi, Dominique speaking!

- Hi Dom, I'm calling you for an update. How's it going?

- Ummm...okay...the conditions are pretty tough (silence interspersed with disturbing sounds, rustling and flapping sails etc.). Call me later...we're in a bit of trouble!

Second attempt, half an hour later:

- Hi Dom...is now a good time?

- Sure, sorry about earlier. The conditions here are really hard going. There is not a lot of wind but the seas are huge and messed up. When you rang earlier, a huge wave hit Mirabaud right on the beam and knocked us down. I had to go and give Michèle a hand on deck.

- Is the situation better now?

- Yeah, its okay but we're suffering! We're not in control of our routing because of the ice gates put in place by the race organisers, so we're at the mercy of everything the weather systems can throw at us. For example, at the moment we're heading for the next gate, we have the wind directly astern and we're sailing straight into an area of high pressure.

- Don't you have any alternatives?

- None! There's no wind ahead of us and we're sailing at a bad angle. It's extremely frustrating. The guys ahead of us will soon be battling a huge depression on the nose, so they're not in any better shape. Listen, I have to go...I'm needed on deck.

- Okay, good luck!

THE INFAMOUS AGULHAS BANK

Circumnavigators crossing the Indian Ocean would normally sail to the south of the Kerguelen Islands; however Mirabaud is being forced into a much more northerly route that is taking them directly into the grips of the Agulhas Bank.



This area to the south of the Cape of Good Hope is notorious among sailors and, along with Cape Horn, represents the 'Everest' of ocean sailing. The area is famous for its tempestuous seas and violent winds.

Four elements combine to make the Agulhas banks so dangerous. Firstly the low pressure systems rolling in from the Atlantic give the Cape its other name 'The Cape of Storms'. The banks themselves are caused by an extension of the African continental shelf stretching far out to sea and creating relatively shallow waters of around 200m deep. Combined with some of

the strongest currents on the planet and the warm waters of the Indian Ocean meeting the colder waters of the Atlantic, this creates an explosive mix. The Agulhas Current forms a body of moving water that can stretch as far as 160km wide and up to 300m deep and moves at up to 5 knots. When this mass of water comes up against the strong south-westerly winds, the seas can become truly mountainous.

From this point onwards, the team will be sailing in the Southern Ocean; by far the most gruelling stage of the race.

A TWO HOUR WATCH SYSTEM



Dominique and Michèle are currently using a two hour watch system. "We have to helm a lot, as the autopilot can't handle these rough conditions," explains Dominique. "So we spend around two hours on the helm before trying to get some rest. But, we also need to study our strategy and routing, even if they are limited.

We also need to eat, repair anything that's broken and manage the upkeep and general maintenance of the boat. The good news is that we now have a bunk...we've eaten all the food that was stowed there, so we can finally sleep in it!"

RANKING THE 1ST FEBRUAR 11 PM

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1) VIRBAC PAPREC 3 (+0.0) | 7) NEUTROGENA (+1371.0) |
| 2) MAPFRE (+599.1) | 8) GAES (+1593.5) |
| 3) ESTRELLA DAMM (+720.3) | 9) HUGO BOSS (+ |
| 4) GROUPE BEL (+739.8.6) | 10) CENTRAL LECHERA ASTURIANA (+2042.7) |
| 5) RENAULT Z.E. (+890.5) | 11) WE ARE WATER (+2045.0) |
| 6) MIRABAUD (+1262.4) | 12) FORUM MARITIM CATALA (+2151.1) |



DOMINIQUEWAVRE

www.dominiquewavre.com

Mirabaud & Cie, banquiers privés

Laurent Koutaïsoff
29, boulevard Georges-Favon
1204 Genève
T: +41 58 816 23 90
M: +41 79 786 78 93

MaxComm Communication

Bernard Schopfer
T: +41 22 735 55 30
M: +41 79 332 11 76
bernard.schopfer@maxcomm.ch

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