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**STORM BATTERS GLOBAL RACE FLEET – INJURED CREW EVACUATED**

**Clipper Race encounters hurricane force gusts heading into Roaring Forties.**

**A violent storm has been battering the Clipper Round the World Yacht Race fleet today as it heads through the Indian Ocean from South Africa into the notorious ‘Roaring Forties’ in the Southern Ocean. Winds in excess of 50 knots have been experienced by some of the fleet, punctuated by hurricane force gusts in places. Injuries have been experienced across the fleet with two crew members requiring medical evacuation.**

Michelle Porter (36) from London is to be evacuated with a suspected broken upper right arm from the yacht *Derry~Londonderry~Doire* which is sailing for Port Elizabeth, where she will be transferred to hospital via the South African Coast Guard; this is a precautionary measure as the fleet has a tough two and a half week race ahead. Another yacht has just completed a similar transfer following Australian crew member David Griffin (40) suffering a calf injury aboard *Mission Performance.*

The yacht *Derry~Londonderry~Doire* was hit by a large breaking wave which knocked the vessel sideways. Skipper Sean McCarter reported: “I got on deck to see two crew obviously in pain. Unfortunately one was our medic, round the world crew member Susie Redhouse (42), thus making me the new medic. We quickly got Susie down below with what we feared may be a broken arm. Next was our chief of staff, another round the world crew, Michelle Porter, who swore she was ok but couldn't move her arm. We eventually got them both down below and out of their lifejackets and dry suits to begin the examination. Susie's arm turned out to be a bad bang but Michelle is still in her bunk and we suspect it could be broken.”

Australian crew member David Griffin (40) aboard *Mission Performance* was caught by a wave on the bow and punctured his calf on a cleat, resulting in the yacht suspending racing and heading to Port Elizabeth earlier this afternoon where he was transferred to a Coast Guard vessel. Once ashore he was taken by ambulance to Green Acres Hospital for a thorough assessment and treatment.

David explained: “We were on the bow preparing to take down the head sail. I had my back to the bow, down on one knee, and one wave broke over me so my leg was flat but it pushed me up against the cleat and then a much heavier wave broke over me and hit me square in the back (impaling his calf on the cleat) I feel like I’m in the team now. It’s been pretty hellish conditions.”

Skipper Matt Mitchell (26 from Berkshire and the youngest of the fleet’s professional skippers) reports how they got David below deck so that fellow crew member and ship’s medic Bee Lian Seet, a Singaporean nurse, could make a full assessment. He said: “We were in pretty rough conditions with big waves and 50 to 60 knots of true wind speed, the best part of force 12; the sea state was very rough.

“As the bow ducked into a wave, it picked up a couple of the foredeck crew. I first knew something was up when David, one of our best new recruits, started making his way back to the cockpit, leaving a trail of bloody footprints on the deck as he did so. Given the tough conditions, both David’s fortitude and Bee's overcoming of her sea sickness were admirable.”

Other yachts in the fleet have had lucky escapes with skippers paying tribute to their crews as they dig deep for fortitude and to apply their training and growing experience to keep their yachts sailing safe as well as fast.

On *Jamaica Get All Right,* Turkishcrew member Ilhan Karakay (45) dislocated his right shoulder in a fall below deck. Crew members Nell Wyatt (54 year old General Practitioner from Bradford-on-Avon) and Tony Peters (52 year old Paramedic from Bracknell) tended to him and had to manipulate it back into place. Skipper Pete Stirling (47) from Hampshire, a veteran of a previous Clipper Race observed: “The crew have never seen weather conditions or a sea state like this before but they have all been amazing and willingly done everything asked of them and more besides. I have only seen weather conditions worse than this once before and that was in the North Pacific on the Clipper 2009-10 Race.”

The twelve identical British registered 70 foot ocean racing yachts are carrying 240 international amateur crew, each under the command of a professional skipper, on the world’s longest ocean race; it is now 10,000 miles out of London on the 40,000 miles, 11 month marathon. This is Race 4 of a 16 race series across all six continents. Nearly half the crew are novices before they undertake their extensive pre-race training. The race left Cape Town on 4 November and is expected into Albany, Western Australia towards the end of the month. The unique event ends back in London in July next year.

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