



US Sailing Offshore Safety at Sea

United States Naval Academy

Annapolis, MD

March 29th, 2025

US Sailing Moderators

Captain Jonathan Kabak

STCW Master Unlimited

1600/3000 Auxiliary Sail

US Sailing Safety at Sea Committee

Chair Moderator Working Group

CEO, Oliver Hazard Perry RI

Storm Trysail Club Seamanship Committee

NYYC Seamanship Committee



Kim Smith



US Sailing Moderators

CAPT Kip Louttit USCG (Ret)

- US Sailing Safety at Sea Moderator
- Executive Director, Marine Exchange of Southern California & Vessel Traffic Service Los Angeles and Long Beach
- USCG Academy Graduate
- 30 years active duty
- 4 Annapolis Newport Races
- 4 Annapolis Bermuda Races



Why Are We Here?



Recent Marine Casualties

2024 Newport Bermuda Race

- 2 Abandonments of vessels enroute to Bermuda
- 1 Abandonment on return from Bermuda

2024 Chicago Yacht Club Race to Mackinac

- 1 Crew Overboard
- 3 Catastrophic rigging failures/dismastings

2024 Sydney Hobart Race

- 2 Deaths resulting from trauma from main boom or mainsheet
- 1 Crew Overboard



Incident Reports and Hanson Medals

CHICAGO YACHT CLUB RACE TO MACKINAC INCIDENT REPORT ON 2024 CHICAGO YACHT CLUB RACE TO MACKINAC CREW OVERBOARD INCIDENT - CALLISTO

This report details the crew overboard (COB) incident from the J/125 yacht Callisto, and successful recovery by the charter boat 52 yacht Madcap in a late evening storm on Lake Michigan on Saturday, July 13, 2024. During the 2024 Chicago Yacht Club Race to Mackinac ("Race"), Callisto and Madcap were competing in the Race's Section 3 and Section 2 respectively. Both sections had started early that afternoon east of the Chicago Harbor Light, and at the time of the COB event Callisto had completed approximately 97 nm of the 268 nm race to a position 25 nm from the Michigan shore to the east, 35 nm from the Wisconsin shore to the west, and 50 miles north of the Illinois-Wisconsin border (See Appendix 1 for overview map).

A panel was commissioned to compile interviews, review the incident details, and provide findings and recommendations for the Chicago Yacht Club Mackinac Committee. As well, the panel hopes that by writing this report and making it available, the broader sailing community will learn from this incident. The panel believes that the safety and preparedness of all will benefit from the work here.

Broadly, the crews on both Callisto and Madcap were well versed in best other safety practices as well as each vessel's individual safety equipment and procedures. The fact that Callisto was transmitting AIS data and Madcap was actively tracking AIS position data of nearby boats contributed significantly to the successful recovery. Both vessels' crews acted quickly in response to the COB, however, incident highlights that even highly experienced crews are not immune to management practices that promote effective decisions of responsibility and redundancy of roles aboard. Gaps in these best practices aboard one vessel incident, while the implementation of these concepts by the other vessel efficient and effective rescue.

In addition to video interviews and correspondence with Jim Murray and Dougerty Callisto and Marian and John Hoskins (Madcap), details to the incident were corroborated by correspondence with Jason Andrews (Callisto), Evan Evans (Pommes Piles, skipper), and Dan Lewis (MC-2, skipper).

Chicago Yacht Club Race to Mackinac
Callisto Crew Overboard Incident Panel
March 28, 2025



Abandonment of S/V Gunga D
June 25, 2024 (During 2021)
Contributors: Sheila McCurdy, Ernest Gotschal
Submitted February 12, 2025



Rescue of her Crew
July 2, 2024



The Sinking of the Yacht Alliance, and the Rescue of her Crew by Yacht Callisto, Assisted by Yacht Easter.
Submitted February 13, 2025, with update for facts and an additional recommendation on March 4, 2025



Why Are We Here?

Yacht Name: _____ Sail No: _____ Captain: _____

The following members of the yacht's Newport Bermuda Race® crew have completed onboard drills for the topics listed:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Man Overboard | <input type="checkbox"/> Recovering MOB from the water | <input type="checkbox"/> Abandoning Ship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dismasting | <input type="checkbox"/> Sailing with the Storm Trysail | <input type="checkbox"/> EPIRB |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life Rafts | <input type="checkbox"/> Lifejackets and Harnesses | <input type="checkbox"/> Fire Prevention/Fighting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pyrotechnics | <input type="checkbox"/> Rudder/Steering Loss or Failure | <input type="checkbox"/> Preventer Rigging |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications Equipment | <input type="checkbox"/> AIS / Personal Crew Overboard Beacons | <input type="checkbox"/> Satellite Phone Use |



Safety at Sea Training

Original International Offshore Safety at Sea Certificate

(World Sailing Compliant)

Completion of 15 Module On-Line Training

or

Completion of in-person Offshore Safety at Sea course

and

Attendance at a US Sailing sanctioned Hand-On training course

Refresher International Offshore Safety at Sea Certificate

Completion of in person Hand's On training

Completion of online modules 11-15 if not previously completed



What's the difference between a professional mariner and a recreational sailor?



You Can't Buy Safety

Purchase-Safety Equipment

Engage in-Risk Management and
Mitigation

Work to- Maintain Situational
Awareness



Responsibility and accountability

Chain of Command

Situational Awareness

Crew Resource Management

Ensure all crew know they are responsible for
observing and communicating changing
conditions



Predeparture Risk Assessment and Briefing

- GAR Assessment or other Risk Assessment Tool
- Everyone knows how to start the engine
- How to use the VHF, SSB, Sat Phone, Iridium GO
- When “don’t we wear PFDs?”
- Don’t do a great job of convincing yourself you should go out there!



GAR Assessment



National Department of Response

Surface Operations Risk Calculation Worksheet

Calculating Risk Using the GAR Model

(**GREEN-AMBER-RED**)

This Worksheet should be used for all surface operations unless other GAR forms have been mandated by local OIAs.

GAR IS BASED ON A TEAM DISCUSSION TO UNDERSTAND AND EVALUATE THE RISKS ATTENDANT TO A MISSION AND HOW THEY WILL BE MANAGED.

RISK MANAGEMENT IS WHAT IS IMPORTANT; NOT THE ABILITY TO ASSIGN NUMERICAL VALUES OR COLORS TO RISK ELEMENTS.

Assign a risk code of 0 (For No Risk) through 10 (For Maximum Risk) to each of the six elements below. The discussion should start with the junior (least experienced) members first on each category.

Supervision - qualifications / experience / communications	
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Planning - details / clarity / vessel selection and condition	
--	--

Team Selection - qualifications / experience	
---	--

Team Fitness - physical / mental state	
---	--

Environment - seas / visibility / wind / current / temperatures	
--	--

Event/Evolution Complexity - details / tasks	
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Total Risk Score	
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GAR Assessment

GAR Evaluation Scale - Color Coding the Level Of Risk

0	23	44	60
10	20	30	40
50	50	50	50
GREEN (Low Risk)	AMBER (Caution)	RED (High Risk)	RED (High Risk)

If the total falls in the green zone, risk is at a minimum. If the total falls in the amber zone, risk is moderate and you should consider adopting procedures to minimize risk.

IF THE TOTAL FALLS IN THE RED ZONE, YOU NEED TO IMPLEMENT MEASURES TO REDUCE THE RISK PRIOR TO STARTING THE EVENT/EVOLUTION.

THE GAR MODEL SHOULD BE USED AS PART OF PLANNING OPERATIONS, AND SHOULD BE CONTINUALLY REASSESSED AS WE REACH MILESTONES WITHIN OUR PLANS, OR AS ELEMENTS CHANGE.

August 2009



<https://rdept.cgaux.org/documents/GAR%20Model%20Surface%20Ops.pdf>

Predeparture Risk Assessment and Briefing

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Post Voyage Debrief

- Not just about the cocktails and war stories
- Where can we do better?
- Who is making the change?
- Did we have a good time?
- Did we learn something?
- Ten fingers, twelve toes?





Let's Get Underway!!