



News Around the World

this all combines to make this option inadvisable also! It condemns us to be behind. The America's Cup is an exercise in all or nothing. There is actually no room for conservatism if you want to do well.

SH: Looking ahead, do you support the proposal to bring the next Cup forward to 2009?

MF: Definitely. It would be very good – if it is agreed sufficiently in advance. A firm schedule is essential for attracting sponsors.

SH: And the boats next time...

MF: The boats must be simpler, but without canting keels, which are counterproductive for match-racing. However, making small revisions to the rule, like this time, goes nowhere. It just makes standing still that much more expensive.

I would like to see boats with much smaller crews, even at the expense of bringing in mechanical systems. Currently there are too many people on the boats and the supporters do not understand it. And today's races are boring, even for Cup enthusiasts. They are predictable. Boats and races in which things happen are required.

If in car or motorbike racing there were no 'off-track excursions', or breakdowns, then the races would also be very boring... even though the speeds are very high. We need to increase the drama, but preferably without exposing our crews to excessive danger!

Carlos Pich



After a punishing and widely criticised performance in the Around Alone onboard *Hexagon* (now *Pindar*) Graham Dalton is overdue some better fortune with his new Open 50 in the forthcoming Velux 5 Oceans Race

NEW ZEALAND

Graham Dalton is about to revive his interrupted dream of racing solo around the world, with an Open 50 entry in the Velux 5 Oceans Race. But Dalton's doggedness in pursuing an ambition that was first kindled by Sir Francis Chichester's circumnavigation 40 years ago now has an added and very poignant motivation.

His bright yellow yacht, designed by Greg Elliott, is called *A Southern Man – AGD*. The initials AGD refer to his son Anthony, who died of cancer just before Christmas.

For Graham, completing a round-the-world race is very much unfinished business. His last effort with the Owen-Clarke designed Open 60 *Hexagon* came to a premature end when he suffered a dismasting off Argentina, after rounding Cape Horn.

That campaign, heavily backed by HSBC, was mired in difficulties and controversy from the outset. First, a late change to the IMOCA rules when Clipper Ventures took over the race forced Dalton into a significant design modification, which cost time and money. Then there were difficulties with his qualifying sail and a dismasting during a pre-race Atlantic crossing, which put him further behind schedule.

Finally, he received a 60-hour time penalty for arriving late in Newport, RI for the race start. Then came a second dismasting off Argentina, which finally brought the trouble-torn effort to an end.

Dalton does not hide from the fact that the 2002 campaign failed to live up to its potential and says he learned a lot from it. Without wishing to duck personal responsibilities, he says the burden of sponsor obligations and problems with his shore team left him in an intolerable situation.

'I was being stretched five ways. There were wrong calls at sea, but besides trying to compete in a yacht race, I was also trying to run an office from the boat. I would start each leg of the race absolutely knackered.'

While the dramas and disappointments were highlighted in the media, Dalton says it is not often remembered that when he was finally forced to quit, he had overcome his 60-hour deficit and was lying third on the Southern Ocean leg and third overall in the race.

However, thwarted ambition was quickly put into perspective when Dalton's son, Tony, twin-brother of Nick, was diagnosed with cancer. Dalton devoted himself to supporting Tony and during the long, gruelling battle with the disease the two talked often about sailing. 'He told me I had to get it out of my system,' recalled Graham. 'I told him that if he wanted me to do another campaign,

he could name the boat. We talked about a lot of names over the months.

'Even when he was very ill, he carried on talking about it. Just before Christmas he told me he had figured a way that I could do the race and we could still be together. He told me he was going to give me an early Christmas present.' The present turned out to be two video-capable cell-phones from Vodafone. 'He told me that the phones meant I could be at sea, but we would still be together.' Tragically, Tony died before Christmas. 'He is a very important part of this campaign,' said Graham. 'He is the motivation.'

The time devoted to his son's illness meant Dalton had little opportunity to go out hunting for corporate sponsorship. In fact, the decision to go ahead with the project was taken when Dalton was in Melbourne as his son underwent stem cell therapy. 'Richard Bearda [shore manager in the latter stages of the Hexagon campaign] came to see me in Melbourne. I was in a situation where I had to say, what if I get no sponsorship at all, could I write the cheque? The answer was yes, so we made the decision to go ahead.'

While he is still hoping to secure a name sponsor, a long list of companies and suppliers have supported him with equipment, most notably Lewmar and Navtec.

Designer Greg Elliott says a big part of the approach was to make the boat as simple and easy to sail as possible.

'It is challenging to design to the IMOCA rule,' said Elliott.

'I am not a total fan. It forces you into a certain form, which is wide-bodied. It doesn't create a good, all-round boat, in my opinion.'

Nevertheless, the bold yellow boat has been created in a carbon-foam sandwich construction to a very high standard by Davie Norris Boatbuilders in Christchurch. It is a typical Elliott machine, aggressive looking with reverse sheer, plumb bow and a minimal blister coachroof. The features include twin transom-hung rudders, gennaker bowsprit, a combination of water ballast and canting-keel, and a single daggerboard forward of the main fin and bulb.

The mast is a conventional triple-spreader rig, with plenty of support from swept-back spreaders.

Observing all the necessary cautions against talking up the performance, Dalton is nevertheless excited about the package. Sadly, however, the early promise of six Open 50s in the race fleet has dwindled away. 'It looks like the course has proved too hard,' said Dalton. 'It is a killer course – Spain – western Australia – Florida, USA – Spain. And now it looks like I am the only Open 50 in the race. At first I was disappointed about the other 50s dropping out, but now I figure I have already beaten them in the first race, the one that gets you to the start.'

Dalton, who, for those who don't know, is the older brother of

IVOR WILKINS



Sir Francis will be turning in his grave. A simple error of navigation resulted in Chichester's Illingworth and Primrose-designed ketch *Gipsy Moth IV* running hard aground on the Tuamotu atoll in the Pacific while en route from the Marquesas to Tahiti. *Gipsy Moth* is on a 20-month charity voyage that – once repairs are completed – will take her around the globe with a rotating crew from volunteer organisations. Unlike Sir Francis's record-breaking solo voyage, his famous yacht's latest trip will not involve the Southern Ocean...

Emirates Team New Zealand boss, Grant, hopes he will not be spat out of the back of the remaining fleet. Clearly, he does not expect to compete with the new-generation Open 60s, but is optimistic he can mix it up with some of the older 60-footers.

The boat was scheduled to go into the water in May, with its first competitive outing in June for the Auckland to Fiji race, which he will do with Elliott, Richard Macalister from Kiwi Yachting Consultants and Richard Bearda as crew. Then it will return to Auckland for any tweaking that might be required before being shipped by Hamburg Sud to Savannah, from where Dalton will do his qualifying passage to the start city of Bilbao, Spain.

If part of the formula for success in any major ocean race is guts and bloody-minded determination, Dalton's comeback campaign shows he has plenty of those. With the added motivation of racing in his son's memory, Dalton has plenty riding on this effort. 'It sounds like a lot of hard work right now,' he said. 'It is either the smartest thing I have ever done, or the dumbest. Time will tell.'

And the Fiji Race with Dalton will not be the only ocean racing Greg Elliott is doing this year. The supermaxi *Maximus*, which he co-designed with Clay Oliver, has now had a new mast fitted and is being shipped from Italy to New York. It will do several coastal races in the USA before taking part in the Newport-Bermuda Race.

Elliott will join the boat for the Bermuda Race, where, with the right conditions, they will no doubt be aiming for a record passage. Other Elliott projects underway at the moment include two 50-footers with retractable canting keels, both designed for the IRC rule.

Ivor Wilkins

AUSTRALIA

That Sydney-Hobart record

Well, if all the ducks line up in a row for *ABN Amro One*'s skipper, Mike Sanderson, then *Wild Oats XI*'s current Hobart Race record could be shortlived as the 2006 Sydney-Hobart is in his sights. And Paul Cayard's *Black Pearl* might also be there to give him a run for the money.

It's been confirmed that there will be an ongoing programme of racing for both *ABN Amro*'s Volvo 70s after the completion of the Volvo Ocean Race in Gothenburg in June. And with that knowledge in hand Moose was busy looking at all the options during the recent Baltimore/Annapolis stopover for the VOR fleet.

Speculation is that *ABN Amro One*, which now looks to be unbeatable in the VOR, will be based in the Med and campaigned there until the winter. After that Moose's interest will turn to the southern hemisphere, and the options there include the Sydney to Hobart. During the same period *ABN Amro Two* will probably cross the Atlantic and be campaigned in America. The Chicago-Mackinac race is one target under consideration.

Having raced *ABN Amro One* hard over more than 20,000nm since November, and in that time broken the world 24-hour record, Sanderson believes that in the right conditions his 70-footer could well outrun the new supermaxis like *Wild Oats XI*. It's a belief that is easy to understand when you realise that reeling off 500nm days has been like a walk in the park for the Volvo Open 70s since the race started. And it can't be forgotten that *ABN Amro Two* has since pushed the monohull 24-hour record out to an impressive 563nm.

One other Volvo 70 almost certain to start the Hobart is the rejuvenated *Brunel*, managed to date by Grant Wharington. It is destined to pass into the ownership of Cruising Yacht Club of Australia vice-commodore Matt Allen shortly after the race. He successfully campaigned the Farr 52 *Ichi Ban* for many seasons and was one of the early backers for Wharington's VOR campaign.

Allen would be more than pleased to see that the hurried but well co-ordinated modifications made to *Brunel* after it arrived in its home port, Melbourne, at the end of the leg from Cape Town, have given the boat a new lease of life. While light conditions didn't suit its voluminous hull shape, *Brunel* was obviously sailing better when it rejoined the race in Baltimore. The modifications were significant – a new keel bulb; twin daggerboards replacing the fixed canard; shroud anchorages moved inboard, and larger rudders.

Rob Mundle