



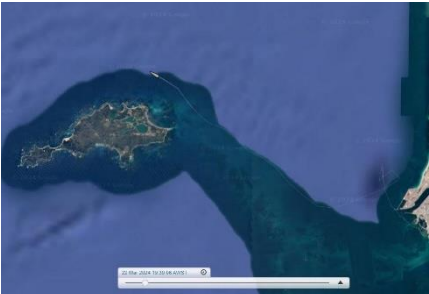
2024 Cape Naturaliste Return

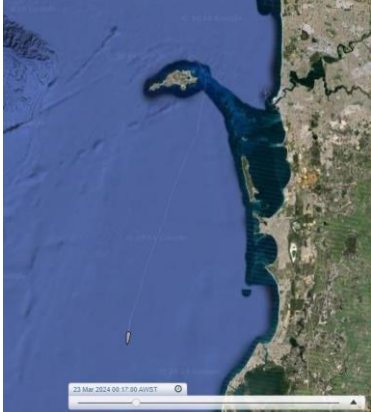
Baci Incident Review

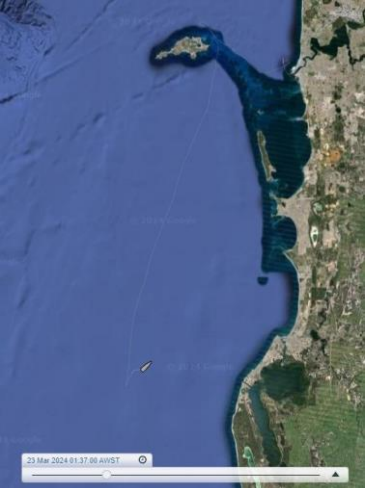
Timeline of events as recalled by Race Officials, First Responders & Competitors Involved.

Report Finalised 15th July 2024

TIMELINE – compiled from RC Documents and Crew Members Recollections

Friday 22 nd March 2024	
18:00	Start of 60 th Cape Naturaliste & Return Ocean Race
18:00	Start of race, 4 POB on board. Winds east 10-15knots, strengthening.
18:30	Whilst gybing towards the western transit marker, the spinnaker had wrapped itself thru the inside of the forestay. I went up the mast in the bosun's chair to release the halyard from the spinnaker, we were running north with the full main sail and spinnaker tied off with a spare sheet back to the mast. It took approximately 30 minutes to lower the spinnaker and get the yacht back on course. At no time during this unplanned manoeuvre do we come near or hit any unknown obstacles.
19:00	Continue racing, heading south. Winds were strengthening, sailing with full main sail and full headsail. During this time, received radio call from Race Control asking if we were OK, responded yes via Radio (approx. 7pm?).
19:30	Decided to continue racing, knowing the rest of the fleet were approximately 10-15 miles ahead of Baci.
19:39	SMS sent to Baci by Duty Race Officer as they were tracking north of Rottnest Island (not expected course) “BACI are you ok, Race Control” 
20:00	We had settled into race mode and watch shifts (2 on/2 off).
20:00	Reduce headsail, partly furled. Winds strengthening, 20-25 knots. Start of 2 hour shift rotation, 2 people on watch for 2 hours, 30 min rotation of helm. Nick and JP were on watch 08.00 pm - 10.00 pm.
20:30	Reduce Mainsail, first reef. Heading south, boat speed was around 8-9 knots. Winds East South East, 25 knots.
21:00	Reefed the main and reduced the headsail, maintained speeds of between 8.5-9.5kn head due south
22:00	Change of watch, Dom and I started our 2 hour watch. Reduced headsail further, yacht being rounded up a lot.
23:00	Still doing similar speeds, I had the helm for 45 minutes, handing over to Nick as part of our watch. Still doing 8.5-9kn. A couple of larger slams into swell during this time but nothing that caused alarm or any sudden change of direction. None of the crew at this time noticed any reduction of speed, sudden change of direction or impacts which suggested any Keel damage.

Saturday 23 rd March 2024	
00:00	Change of watch, Nick and JP started their 2 hour watch. I went down to the port aft cabin and proceeded to sleep.
00:17	Response on RC phone "BACI ok" 
00:50	I was woken by a large sound and feeling of the boat slamming into a wave. I checked the time as I was aware of being back on watch at 02.00 am
01:00	Dom came up from the forward cabin and stated that there was water in the bow. After a brief assessment and getting all (4) crew on deck, we changed direction and headed back towards Fremantle. Text was sent via SAT phone to Race control by me stating that we are taking on water, all safe , withdrawn from race and heading back to Fremantle. (Apparently the text was not received by Race Control). Bilge pumps were both working at this stage. Source of leak was unknown and undefined, despite extensive searches below decks. Both bilges operational
01:10	I was woken again, this time by the sound of the yacht tacking and changing course. I was very unsure why the yacht was changing course as we should have been on the rumline and heading straight for Bunker Bay. Dom was calling down to me, asking for me to come up on deck and help.
01:15	I went up into the cockpit, and Dom was explaining the yacht was taking on water and we needed to return to harbour.
1.15am approx	We realised water intake was higher than expected. Changed direction and started to head towards Halls Head Marina. Place a VHF Radio Mayday Call to Coastal radio advising of our situation, status, POB etc and requested assistance. Advised by Coastal radio to activate Boat EPIRB at this time, which was done. Engine started and manual bilge commenced. Continued to stay in contact with Coastal radio until radio electronics died. Engine & nav lights operational, Boat speed still 7-8kn.
01:30	Completely furled the headsail, engine was running. Heading back to Fremantle, 1 reef in the main sail. Winds East South East 25 knots. Dom was on the helm, Nick was on the radio to Sea Rescue, JP and I were in the cockpit.
01:35	Decision is made to change course and head for Mandurah. Yacht is motor sailing, boat speed 7 knots. Water is visible downstairs in the yacht, floorboards are starting to lift on the leeward side. Epirb has been activated. JP had commenced operating the manual bilge pump located in the cockpit, Dom was on the helm, Nick was on the radio.

01:37	Baci rang RC to advise they were taking on water, no electrics/radio. Heading to Mandurah Crew ok Nick (Baci crewman) has rung Water Police 
01:39	Trevor Milton PRO has been notified
01:43	Water Police notified of Crew List, PLB #'s and Boat Details YB position 32°34.77S 115°24.82E Will take an hour to reach
01:55	Rick Coate (GM RPYC) notified Baci advised they are 15 NM from Mandurah
2.00am approx.	Police Helicopter arrives and take station overhead. Placed mobile call to Race Control. Contact established via handheld radio from Baci emergency kit. Baci's bow no at the gunnels. Water in main cabin now 1-2ft deep and floor panels floating. All bilges still working and manual bilge continued.
02:30	Helicopter is present in the sky, hovering above. Sea rescue boat is visible on the horizon. Yacht is continuing heading east for Mandurah, boat speed 7 knots.
2.30am approx.	Mandurah Sea Rescue arrive on Spirit of Mandurah (SOM) and contact established via handheld Radio. Approx 15-20 minutes later the second support vessel arrived. Once contact established and crew safety verified, Polair departed the scene. Both rescue vessels take station adjacent to Baci while we continue to sail/motor towards Halls Head. Engine & Nav lights still working.
02:45	2 Sea Rescue boats arrive and communicate with us by radio, we advise the yacht still has power and steerage and we are asked to continue motoring in towards Mandurah under the escort of Sea Rescue. Excessive amounts of water downstairs, bow is under water.
02:46	David (Duty RO) & Emma now monitoring from FSC Radio Room Spirit of Mandurah (Mandurah Volunteer Sea Rescue Craft) on VHF CH82
02:50	Spirit of Mandurah have a visual of Baci Boat looks bow heavy
03:00	Water level down stairs has increased significantly and the engine stalls due to the rising water level.
3.00am approx	Engine fails and decision is made to abandon ship. Spirit of Mandurah came alongside, and the crew stepped off Baci. The decision was made with the SOM put Baci under tow from SOM, Nick and JJ (Rescue Crew), returned on board to steer Baci under tow. Bow now underwater, Nav lights still working. Approx 8nm from Halls Head. Bilges still operating
03:05	Travis Burtenshaw (BOM RPYC) on route to Mandurah Volunteer Sea Rescue Mandurah advise that they are getting crew off boat and placing boat under tow
03:05	Sea Rescue advise all crew must abandon the yacht. Sea Rescue come alongside Baci to retrieve the 4 crew
03:07	Crew now transferring off Baci

03:10	All 4 crew are safely on Sea Rescue, a conversation regarding towing the yacht is being had between the 2 Sea Rescue boats
03:15	Decision is made to attempt towing the yacht in towards Mandurah. Sea Rescue crewman connects tow lines to the yacht
03:20	Yacht is being towed but is swinging uncontrollably due to the helm not being locked into central position. Nick and JJ (Sea Rescue crewman) board the yacht and helm whilst under tow. Dom, JP and myself are onboard the Sea Rescue boat watching. Continue towing towards Mandurah
03:34	Mandurah Volunteer Sea Rescue rang to advise everyone on board is safe Travis to contact them on 9535 4789 when he arrives to be let in the front gate Baci is under tow with Nick and JJ on board to steer
03:45	Remaining crew (Nick & JJ) taken off Baci by the second Rescue vessel. Nav lights still working. Current 2nm from Halls Head.
04:00	Mandurah Volunteer Sea Rescue rang All crew now off Baci Mike Giles arrived at FSC Radio Room
04:00	Sea Rescue captain instructs Nick and JJ to abandon the yacht as the concern of her sinking is increasing. Rescue boat alters course in hope of reaching shallower water.
04:00	Tow rope snaps. Both rescue vessels maintain station until Baci inundated and sinks @ 4:13. Nav lights still working!
04:10	The tow line from the Sea Rescue boat snapped and the yacht was more than half submerged, bow was completely under water. The yacht continued to go underwater until she landed on the seafloor and rolled over landing on her port side. Co Ordinates were being noted and relayed by radio.
04:12	Baci sinking in depth of 13m 32°31.681S 115°39.631E
04:18	Mandurah confirmed Baci has sunk Mast on vessel is 19m high Life ring floating 60L of Diesel on board Spirit of Mandurah heading back to base
04:20	Sea Rescue began transporting us back to their base at Mandurah
04:22	Crew heading back to Mandurah Volunteer Marine Rescue on board Rescue Vessels
04:47	Crew arrives at Mandurah Volunteer Sea Rescue and meet Travis
05:00	Return to dock in HH, meet Travis, undertake debrief with Mandurah Sea Rescue and travel back to Perth.
05:00	We arrived at the Sea Rescue base in Mandurah and were greeted by Travis Burtenshaw. We had a debrief regarding the rescue and sinking of the yacht.
05:10	Crew are driven back to FSC with Travis Burtenshaw
05:10	Travis Burtenshaw began driving the 4 of us back to Fremantle Sailing Club.
06:00	Arrive to Fremantle Sailing Club.
08:00	Rick Coate advised General Committee of RPYC, Fremantle Sailing Club and Australian Sailing.

Feedback received from parties / agencies involved.

I feel that the Sea Rescue teams have made an enormous effort in rescuing us and the attempt to tow Baci into safer waters.

I am grateful to everyone involved with the rescue and Travis Burtenshaw for being thoughtful enough to collect us from Mandurah and driving us back to Fremantle. Royal Perth Yacht Club and Fremantle Sailing Club have both been very supportive in the time since the incident occurred.

Only comment from Police was that there was no notification of the race in advance. This can simply be an email to the Water Police with the relevant information. This will trigger notification to the various volunteer Marine rescue teams who will ensure they have teams to provide coverage – or at the very least, an opportunity to manage their resources in advance. A general awareness always assists us in planning a response.

From Race Management – having the crew information (ie plb#s) available as separate documents to send to relevant authorities would have simplified some of the procedure.

Comments from Paul Arns who competed in the 2024 Cape Naturaliste Race

There are really only three issues that I would like to comment on.

1. Keel Inspections
2. Communications
3. Safety equipment

Keel Inspections

Periodic keel and rudder inspections are now mandatory under Aust Sailing regulations. Given the potentially catastrophic consequences of a keel separation, all boats entering a cat 1, 2 and 3 races must provide proof of compliance with the regulations. I presume that Baci was compliant, but the incident is a reminder of the importance of regular and thorough hull and keel inspections by qualified persons

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Communications

The SSIs for the Naturaliste race provided for schedule reporting by Satellite or mobile phone and not VHF radio.

The issues on board Baci were not known by the other boats when the incident occurred. There was no opportunity to consider giving assistance to Baci by other competitors. Providing assistance may have been academic in the circumstances of this race because of the distance to the next closest yacht but in other circumstances the other competitor boats may be best placed to respond to calls for urgent assistance

Satphones will continue to be advocated and used for SKEDS in yacht racing but in emergency situations communications by radio which can be heard not only by the boat in distress but all other boats, is probably the better option. Note recommendation 7 in the report prepared following the loss of Finistere.

Review of Safety Equipment

The incident report form submitted by Baci does not refer to the failure of any safety equipment on board but the incident is a reminder of the importance of ensuring adequate maintenance and serviceability of all safety equipment on a boat. All crew participating in offshore racing should know not only where all safety equipment is stowed on the boat but also be familiar with and know how to use the equipment.

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Thanks again for the opportunity to comment on the report. There will be quite a bit of interest in the formal report when it is published and I expect there will be comment and feedback from the offshore community on the findings and recommendations.