

ORC Europeans – Le Pelican – Salona 37 – collision, sinking

16 May 2021 'Le Pelican' Salona 37 collision at night with tug boat, crew abandoned to liferaft.

<https://www.sailingscuttlebutt.com/2021/05/16/yacht-sinks-at-start-of-orc-europeans/> Yacht sinks at start of ORC Europeans

Published on May 16th, 2021

The 66th edition of the Regata dei Tre Golfi got underway May 15 with a record fleet of over 110 boats in what was also the first race of the ORC European Championship. But following the 7:00 pm start for the 150nm course, the Salona 37 Le Pelican (above, #16373) sunk near Ventotene after colliding with a tug boat.

At approximately 02:50 CEST, the incident was reported to the Italian with the crew deploying the life raft and all 7 crew boarded safely. The Italian Navy assisted and pulled the entire crew out of the raft and onto their rescue vessel. All crew were then transferred to Naples. No medical attention was requested by the crew of Le Pelican and all crew were reported in good condition.

Le Pelican was entered in the Tre Golfi in Class C as a participant in the ORC European Championship when they disappeared from tracking screens.

"The conditions were particularly challenging, with two-metre waves, and we were sailing upwind on a port tack," commented a crew member who was on deck at the time of the accident.

"A result of a bad maneuver, in minutes we found ourselves in a critical situation with a cargo barge navigating between Naples and Ventotene just a few metres from us, and at that point a collision was inevitable. We managed to get the life raft into the sea and in just under 3 minutes our boat went under."

Coincidentally, it was the decision of the Organizing Committee to make carrying a life raft onboard mandatory, even though this is not a requirement for Category 3 under the World Sailing regulations for safety equipment.

The race course starts off Naples with competitors racing to Ponza before returning to round the Li Galli islets off Positano before crossing the finish line in Capri.

The fleet competing in the ORC European Championship will have until May 17 to complete the offshore race, making their base then in Capri for the second phase of the championship. From May 18 to 20 there are three days of buoy racing with a total of 6 races scheduled, including the offshore to score for the title of ORC European Champion 2021.

www.giornaledellavela.com/2021/05/19/tre-golfi-accident/?lang=en

Fear at the 66th "Tre Golfi" (a 150-mile offshore race along the route Naples – Ponza – Li Galli – Capri). The seven crew members of Filippo Gazzero's Salona 37 Le Pelican (sail number ITA 16373, photo above) had a very hard time of it: at 2.50am on Sunday morning, following a collision with a bettolina (a small boat that transports goods or liquids to larger ships in the port area) between Ventotene and Naples, the boat sank in less than three minutes.

Fortunately, the Organising Committee had decided to make it compulsory to take a self-inflating raft, although this is not required by category 3 of the World Sailing regulations for safety equipment.

After putting the life raft in the water and embarking all 7 crew members, they were immediately taken on board the ship itself, under the control of the Harbour Master – CoastGuard. The entire crew was then transferred to Naples on board the ship,

no one was injured.

THE ACCIDENT

The conditions were particularly challenging, with a two-metre wave and we were sailing upwind on the left-hand side,” said one of the crew members who was on deck at the time of the accident, “We found ourselves in a critical situation in a few moments, with a small boat sailing between Naples and Ventotene just a few metres away from us, and the impact was inevitable. We managed to get the life raft overboard and see our boat sink in just under three minutes”.

On board Le Pelican was the Turin skipper Stefano Gnech, who told Corriere della Sera that the race was supposed to be a training session in preparation for the legendary Fastnet Race, where the close-knit team should participate as the only Italian team. “Four of us ended up in the water,” he said, “I went under but managed to cut the sail to resurface, three others were asleep and woke up in the water.

In January, the crew had taken part in safety courses, including a drill that simulated falling into the water while dressed. The experience paid off.

There was no chance of recovering the Salona 37 Le Pelican (11.29 x 3.60m), one of the boats that we also got to know in our TAG Heuer VELA Cup circuit.

It is understood that the Italian Coastguard are conducting an investigation in to the incident.