

Team Becker and Karpinska representing the USA



General Statement regarding USA participation in the 2019 EUROSAF Mixed Offshore European Championship

Co-Skippers Peter Becker and Barbara (Basia) Karpinska represented the USA at the 2019 EUROSAF Mixed Offshore European Championship, sailing in the north Adriatic Sea starting from Venice Italy in the new L30 class boat. It goes without saying that to represent your country at a regional or world championship is a true honor and a validation of one's ability and national status. With this representation comes a responsibility to display the national flag respectfully and to present our nation with dignity and pride while winning the respect of the other competitors. We believe this was successfully done in style. The USA is not particularly known for its short-handed offshore sailing, and Peter and Basia were up against a formidable who's who of accomplished sailors in the offshore discipline, none the less we feel a formidable start was made in putting the world on notice that the USA is taking this new event very seriously and working hard to up our game. Engagement with the other national teams off the water was helpful and will prove over the long run instrumental to the probability

of success. Our primary goal was to gain experience and research, both of which will help inform an effective pathway forward to the 2024 Olympic Games.

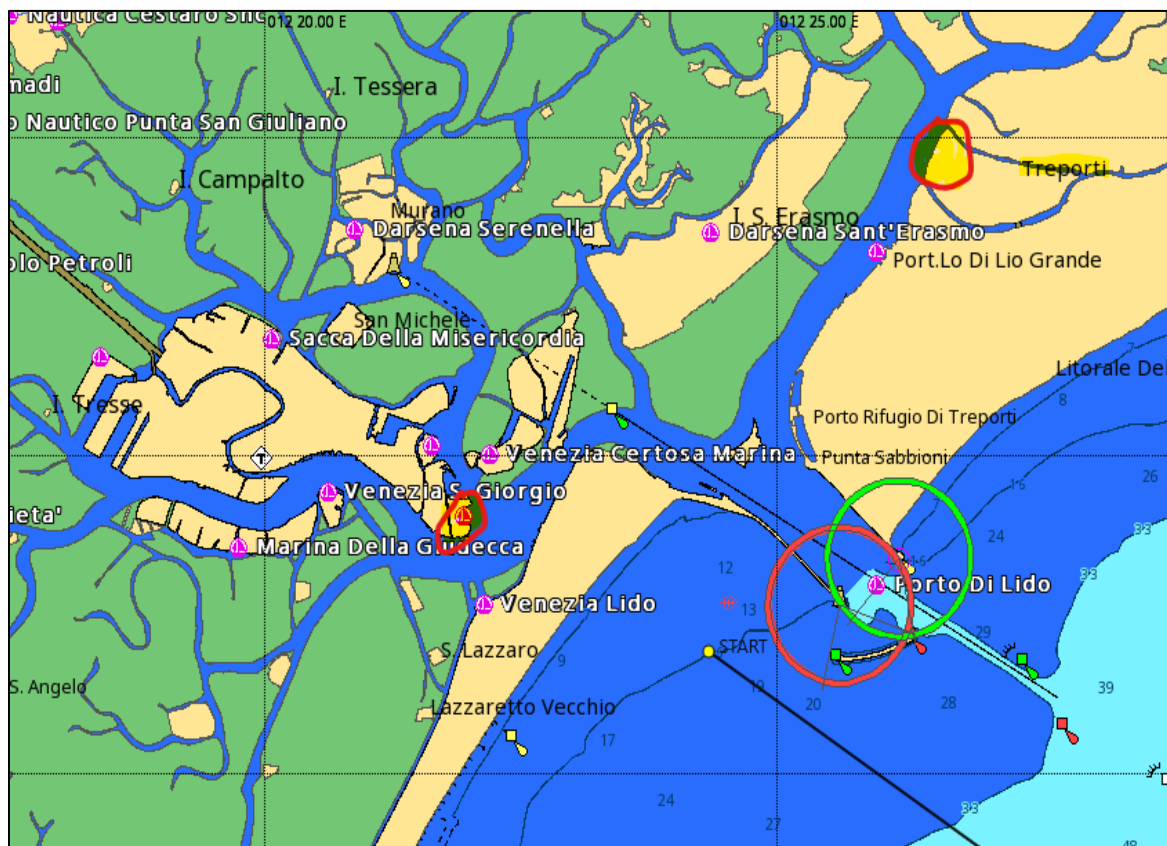
In the big picture, it is exciting to know that the mixed offshore event will be the format that will focus attention on gender equality and opportunity. With only two onboard it is clear that winning crews will be comprised of strong equals. The format demands superior all-around sailing skills which is not as common as might be thought. We in the USA will have to become a bit more French in the short-handed offshore sense and collectively create effective pathways for female sailors to excel in this format. Quoting Stan Honey, “success will come from being open minded, tireless, smart and fit”, all of which is achievable.

The 2024 Olympic Games are a short four and one half years away, and with a focused and collaborative effort there is a good chance that our USA team will be prepared to excel in this demanding event.

Race Venue

Starting in Venice and ending in Trieste.

The boats were initially stationed at a marine facility located in Treporti, a 1.5 – 2 hour commute from Venice proper. The commute turned out to be manageable and the water adjacent to the Treporti boatyard facility was sufficient for short practice. The open water of the Adriatic was approx. 3 nm away. Water depth in the lagoon was extremely shallow except in the channels.



The boats relocated to the docks at the Venice YC the day before the distance race start.

The day race to be held in front of San Marco Square was not held due to lack of wind.

A “PR” focused sail was held in front of San Marco producing striking photos of the L30 with iconic Venice in the background before heading out of the lagoon for the start of the distance race.



Event Organization Structure

As the European Championship the event was under the auspices of EUROSAF, and the OA was the Venice Yacht Club with support from Ricardo Simoneschi and his SSI sports promotion firm. The equipment was supplied and managed by the L30 Class. Rodion Luka was the lead for the class and the management of the equipment.

This was the final event of the Nastro Rosa series of events that started in Lake Garda. The Nastro Rosa was organized and presented by Ricardo Simoneschi of SSI Sports & Events.



Event Organization Performance

The USA team pre-arranged to practice early before the event without additional charter fees. This consideration was being granted due to the fact that we were from a different continent. Others were being asked to pay a day charter rate of 800€ for the early use of the boats. Unfortunately upon arrival we found the boats on the hard and not ready to sail. We spent four days working on the boats.

Rodion Luka was the lead person representing L30 Class i.e. the vendor providing the equipment. There was a team of 5-6 workers dedicated to working on the boats supported by a NKE representative.

The USA team was able to only have two short (1+ hour each) sails before the race. There was no opportunity to sail with many of the sails in the inventory (J3, Code Zero, A3) before the start of the distance race.

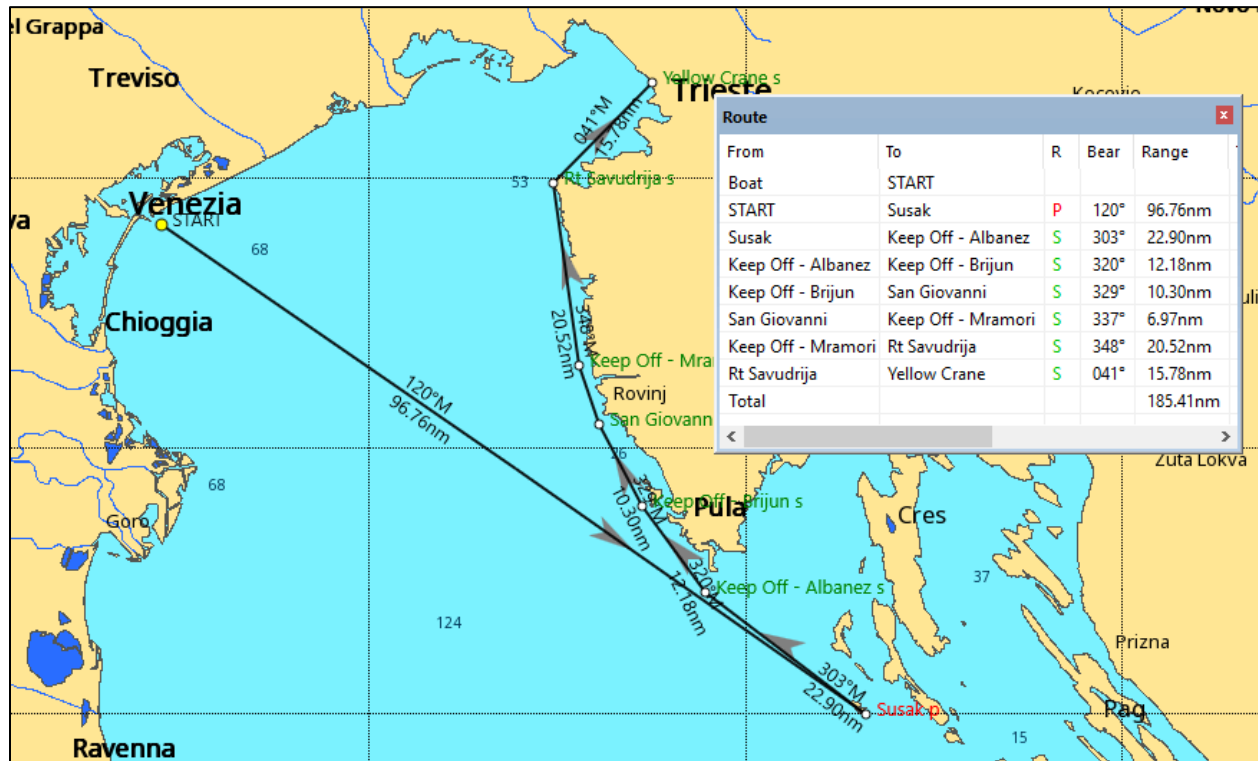
The lack of wind did not provide an opportunity for racing or sail training. Also, because the general feeling of the crews was that there was need for additional time to familiarize with the equipment and to prepare the boats for offshore, the day race was canceled.

Offshore Race Course

The course was from Venice around an island off the Croatian coast called Susak approximately 100nm out, returning to the finish in Trieste keeping to starboard all rocks and islands on the Croatian coast line. The total course length was 185 nm. The selection of the course was partially due to the incentive

to keep the fleet close to the Croatian because of the concern for the Bora winds which can exceed 50-60 kts from the NE. It was felt that the Croatian coast would provide shelter in the event of the Bora winds.

At a course distance of 185 nm the course length and duration fell far short of the stated objectives of the World Sailing qualification standards which call for 4 days and 3 nights. EUROSAF had indicated that they were targeting a 48 hour race duration. We came prepared for a longer race and would have preferred that to the shorter course.



Offshore Race Weather

The below image depicts the weather at the start. Light winds at the starting area with down wind conditions. Weather routing did not indicate a strong preference between courses biased east or west. We thought there appeared to be greater wind strength along the Croatian coast. Despite the predicted wind shifting to ahead, the models seemed to indicate a starboard fetch. There was an indication of winds increasing to approximately 25 kts during the night hours.

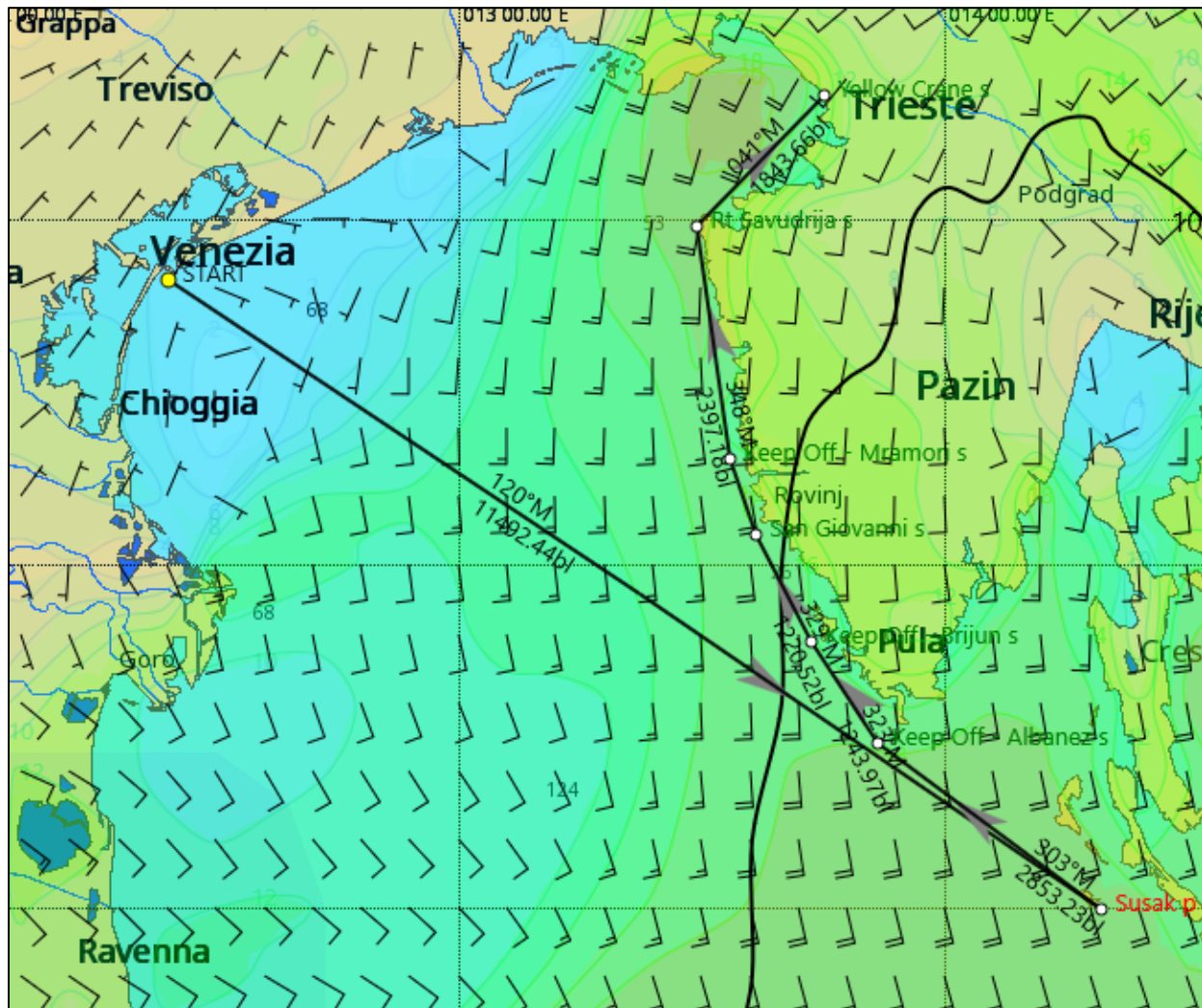
The actual weather results were much different than that predicted by the GRIB files. Many of the GRIB files did not agree for the early half of the race period. We had access to all the high res weather files through Squid and PredictWind, access to which was through sponsorship in kind by the providers. The weather models we were primarily looking at were the following:

- ECMWF Hirnam 9km
- Arpege 9km
- LAMMA 9km

PredictWind PWE

We were able to collect comments regarding the weather that led us to local weather web pages. The base source model was not identified and GRIB files were not available. Much of this information was set aside.

At the start the majority of the models did not agree on the near-term conditions. Some of the local comments seemed to indicate that the weather models often did not accurately predict the weather in the northern part of the Adriatic Sea.



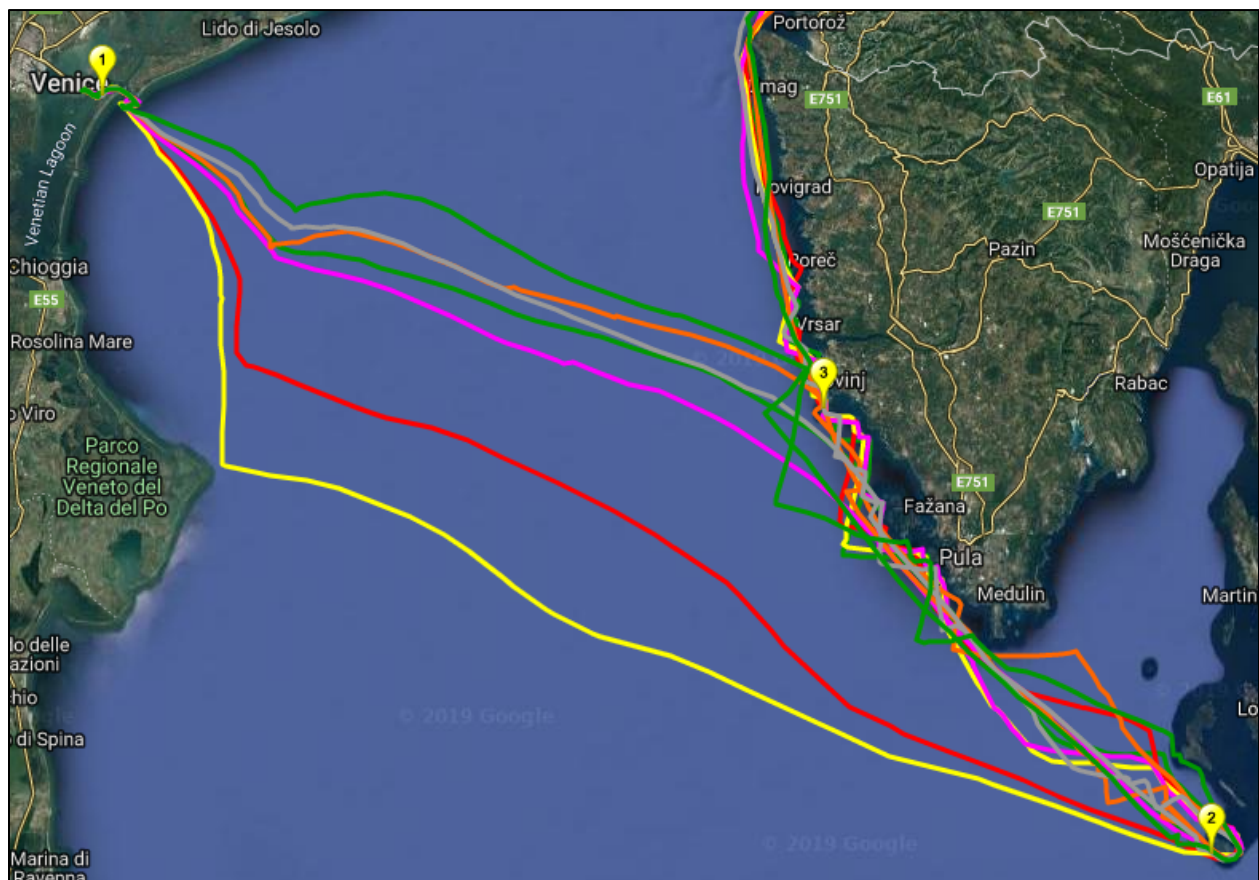
Offshore Race Recap

The first leg saw the fleet split between sailing with the A2 and the Code Zero. USA started with the A2. The fleet, with the exception of two boats, was biased to head more east sailing on Port gybe, heating up as the winds lightened. Before nightfall the wind backed and lifted the port tack boats 10-15 degrees. The visibility was overcast and almost foggy. This led quickly to a condition that as the fleet

gained lateral separation the boats for the most part lost sight of each other. None of the boats were receiving or transmitting AIS and therefore could not track each other except by visual sight. The lack of AIS created a safety consideration.

Belgium and Austria were the two teams that headed to the Italian side of the course. What ultimately happened was the shift came first to those on the Italian side of the course which allowed them to tack and lay the mark while the fleet on the Croatian coast ended up beating. The winds increased to the high 20's with a rather large sea state.

By the time the bulk of the fleet was rounding Susak the wind had dropped significantly. Many of the boats found themselves becalmed while rounding the island of Susak. The return leg between Susak and rounding the last point of land, Rt Savudrija, was characterized by dying winds that were receding leaving the back of the fleet most vulnerable. The rich got a lot richer.



General Comments on the L30

We were favorably impressed with the L30. It is light and responsive. The boat is narrow in beam and rather bluff sided. This lends to a boat that does not want to round up when laid over. The boat maintained its balance through all points of sail and heel angle. One could leave the helm for a significant amount of time before the boat would change course.

It was not always evident that the trim tab on the keel was helping. There were however times when the boat was at speed and you got the sense something good was working with the tab.



Barbara identified immediately that there was not sail or load on the boat that was too heavy or too much of a strain for her to handle with ease. The L30 feels like the right balance of size and performance for a double handed boat.

As the boat is light, it was evident that it was very sensitive to sail trim and technique. Beating in 25 kts plus in a big seas we found sailing under the J3 and a single reef that the difference between careful/high concentration steering and not, was as much as 1-1.5 kts of boat speed.

The Competition

With the exception of the Italian team who were both enrolled in the Navy we were competing against professional teams and sailors. The French and Belgium teams showed up well funded and staffed, along with coaches, shore crew and supporting equipment such as coach boats and supplies. Those two teams were able to get two days of on-water training as a result of having more manpower to apply to preparing the boats along with a demanding attitude to the L30 equipment provider. Some of the teams had sailed the L30 previously and had a level of familiarity with the equipment.

Comments on USA Team Preparation

Not knowing what to expect, the USA team came with as many supplies and tools as physically possible. We had premade wiring harnesses to bring power from the Starboard side of the boat where the electrical distribution panel is located to the Port side where there was the only place to sensibly setup a laptop. Photos show key board, mouse roller ball and display screen and installation of laptop in compartment below. USB and cigarette lighter power we added by us.

For downloading weather files during the race we came prepared with an IridiumGo and a 4G modem with external antennas. We can discuss the lessons learned for both of the systems but suffice to say with such a short race duration and the weather files not falling into good agreement access to weather during the race turned out not to be a critical make or break issue.

We were successful in getting a data link to the NKE system and were lucky to know to provide our own USB extension cables etc. We were prepared with a backup GPS receiver in the event we could not make a connection with the NKE system or in the event the NKE GPS fails. The NKE GPS was coming from the NKE AIS box and therefore not assumed to be a high accuracy GPS position.



Key Factors for Future Success

- Have external weather assistance available immediately before the start for consultation.
- Have historical weather analysis for the area and a typical plan book developed.
- Have the team supported by shore crew and coach to help attend to all the small jobs that need to be accomplished but are extremely distracting and time consuming to the sailing crew.
- Have a coach boat for practice sails to provide feedback on sail shape, crew placement and choreography for optimal efficiency.
- Have stronger agreement and understanding with the equipment provider as to the condition of the equipment and the readiness.
- Have a clear understanding of what equipment and gear must be supplied by the sailing teams. Know and be familiar with the instruments on the boat. In this case, NKE is not typically used in the US.
- Come prepared with sail cross-overs and polar performance files loaded in computer.
- Come prepared with the tuning set points for the pilot.
- Have a plan for the instruments to be calibrated.

Factors to Consider in Preparing USA Olympic Team

- Developing strong balanced teams which both crewmembers are equally strong and interchangeable.
- Strong support network of shore crew and technical experts such as weather forecasters
- Weather routing training – never can have enough!
- Support with and from weather vendors and satellite communications providers. Getting high quality GRIBs on the boat during the race in a simple and reliable way is important.
- Except for the Newport Bermuda Race the USA does not really have races currently on the schedule that fit the 4 day 3 night duration objective. Events need to be specifically created and sailed with OD boats.
- Practice, practice, practice....
- Sleep training and mental conditioning coaching for high stress, less sleep conditions.
- Nutritional considerations for before and during the race, particularly if the duration is extended from 2 to 4 days.
- Train as a multi-crew team focused on raising the skill level for all vs dividing up into individual campaigns.



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