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Volvo Ocean Race - Crew selection critical as start looms

The second half of the four race Leg Zero ended with a drift to the finish but has highlighted the task teams face in the final stages of crew selection and training together.



Dee Caffari - Click image for a larger image

Dee Caffari's Turn the Tide on Plastic was the last to hit the water and she admits that putting together a crew under the new rules and her sponsor requirements has proved difficult.

The Turn the Tide on Plastic campaign, backed by the Mirpuri Foundation and the Ocean Family Foundation, will amplify the United Nations Environment's 'Clean Seas: Turn the Tide on Plastic' message throughout the Race.

The Volvo Race crew requirement is for the crew to consist of five men and five women, and on Turn the Tide six of those places will be for sailors under the age of 30, with three available for young female sailors.

Phil Allen, who worked with Ian Walker's Volvo Ocean Race campaigns, is the team director.

And so far the only officially named crew member is two-time Volvo Ocean Race veteran Liz Wardley, who joined the team as Boat Captain.

Additional names to look out for include: Henry Bomby, Lucas Chapman, Francesca Clapcich, Bernardo Freitas, Bledwyn Mon, Annalise Murphy and Annika Zayac . . .



Turn the Tide on Plastic Fastnet Crew - Click image for a larger image

The Leg Zero qualification races have shown that the early teams, with more experienced crews on board already have an edge, with MAPFRE, Brunel and Dongfeng taking the leading places.

All the skippers are aware that time is running out. They now head to Cascais/Lisbon for final training and fitting-out before moving to the Volvo base in Alicante for the Leg 1 race start on 22 October.

So the pressure is on, and this is especially true for Dee Caffari with only one named crew member and a lot of logistics still to be sorted.

The final shortened race was a boost for Turn the Tide with the period in the lead showing what was possible, even at this early stage.



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After the Leg Zero races Caffari gathered her thoughts:

'To actually lead the fleet in this final stage of Leg Zero was absolutely awesome. The confidence it gave the team, you could see it, and the focus, the intensity, everyone raised their game because they could see the other boats so close.

Obviously now its dealing with the frustration of losing the miles as quickly as we gain them and I think that's part of the lessons learnt.

In the Volvo Ocean Race it's very easy to lose places and miles and it doesn't take a lot as we just saw at the bottom of the Bay of Biscay when the cards were reshuffled in this final leg.

But it's really nice for the guys to follow the fleet, be in the mix, and now having had that experience of leading the fleet and I think they realise there is more pressure leading from the front with everyone chasing you down than it is hunting from the back.

We haven't had a lot of time, we haven't got an announced team yet so it's still kind of difficult to be a team that's building. But it's been quite reassuring that we are taking the right direction with the crew selection by the results we have seen on Leg Zero.



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The gains we've made are quite impressive in a short space of time so I'm quite excited about what potentially can happen now and the time we've got before the main event starts in October.

It's really great this time to have the #cleanseas message, rather than a corporate brand, on our sails and we have a different message on each side of the sail. We want to raise peoples awareness and change peoples behaviour and how they conduct themselves regarding single use plastics.

If we can be seen, be liked and raise people consciousness and awareness around their use of plastic, then we are doing the right thing.'

The 2017-18 edition of the Volvo Ocean Race begins from Alicante on 22 October. The race will take the teams 45,000 nautical miles around the world via a series of Host City stops.

Cardiff is the only UK stop with the fleet arriving from Newport, USA and with a Leg 10 start on 10 June 2018, heading to Gothenburg, Sweden.