

The Ocean Race: Mirpuri Foundation running in two classes?



by Richard Gladwell/Sail-World.com/nz 24 Mar 23:35 UTC
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Turn the Tide on Plastic - Leg 10 from Cardiff to Gothenburg. © Ainhoa Sanchez / Volvo Ocean Race

As part of the launch of The Ocean Race broadcast live from Alicante, Paulo Mirpuri of the Portuguese based The Mirpuri Foundation announced they will be entering a team, rather than just sponsoring an entry, in the first edition of the renamed around the world race.

The new team will be known named "Mirpuri Foundation Racing Team", and will sail in its own right, and will enter the VO65 one-design class, and has a strong interest in entering the new IMOCA65 class.

The Foundation will announce its underlying sustainability message that will tour the world with the team in one and maybe both events.

"Aside from the sporting competition, the Race is also a powerful platform to connect and collaborate with partners – and we're proud of our role in the groundbreaking Sustainability Programme, which sparked a global movement against plastic pollution to restore ocean health", said Chairman Paulo Mirpuri.

"Our team will be very competitive and will fight very hard for our causes as well as for the race trophy. It will be a very special team of sailors with a genuine interest for the environment, for sustainability and for the values of the Mirpuri Foundation", said Paulo Mirpuri, in a written statement published by the Foundation.

Paulo Mirpuri says the Foundation is attracted by the potential of the IMOCA60, which is still having rules developed for its inclusion in The Ocean Race.

The IMOCA60 is expected to be a semi-foiler in a similar stance to the last Vendee Globe race, but with the foiling technology upgraded as a result of the learnings from the single-handed non-stop around the world race.

The spectacle of the IMOCA60's foiling has drawn the attention of hundreds of millions of eyeballs online, and The Ocean Race is expected to substantially improve that with two different, but very spectacular classes participating.



Paulo Mirapuri © Mirpuri Foundation



Turn the Tide on Plastic - 2017/18 Volvo Ocean Race © Mirpuri Foundation

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The foiling monohull Hugo Boss reaching in the Rolex Fastnet Race 2017 - photo © Rick Tomlinson <http://www.rick-tomlinson.com>

British sailor Alex Thomson in Hugo Boss set two new singlehanded records in his foiling IMOCA60 before she broke her starboard foil 400nm past Cape Town as he entered the Southern Ocean. The VO65 was not regarded as a particularly quick boat but altered that perception in a dramatic way, when AkzoNobel turned in the second longest 24-hour distance by a monohull of 601.63nm - just 17nm short of the mark set by the 100ft supermaxi, Comanche.



Turn the Tide on Plastic - 2017/18 Volvo Ocean Race - photo © Mirpuri Foundation

Paulo Mirpuri explains the Foundation's interest: "With the Imoca 60 foiling class, which will be part of the race in 2021, we will see faster and more extreme racing than ever before. I'm extremely interested in this new class, which will showcase the best in technology and innovation. Alongside sustainability, these are both values which we hold dearly at the Mirpuri Foundation."

The Mirpuri Foundation expects to build on its campaigns against plastic pollution which was launched in the last edition of the Volvo Ocean Race by through the gender equal entry "Turn the Tide on Plastic".

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Paulo Mirpuri waves from the stern of Turn the Tide on Plastic at the finish of Leg 11 or the 2017/18 Volvo Ocean Race - photo © Mirpuri Foundation

The VO65 is capable of taking 10 crew plus an OnBoard Reporter, while the IMOCA60 is expected to be limited to just five crew, with no announcement on how in a crew that size, and the spartan IMOCA60, just how the key OBR function will be handled.

A New Zealand based campaign led by a former Turn the Tide crew member, Bianca Cook also appeared in the Livestream event, expressing an interest in getting a New Zealand flagged entry across the start line in The Ocean Race.