



OCEAN  
adventure

By Don McIntyre



# Inside running on Jessica Watson

Our seasoned adventure writer is backing teen solo-sailor Jessica Watson and her quest to be the youngest past the post

I am not a betting man, but much has been made in the media of professional ocean sailor Andrew Cape's letter to Jessica Watson predicting, among other things, a 33 per cent chance of total loss of boat or crew! I'm astounded that someone, anyone, could come up with such a prediction. We have seen it all before though. Jesse Martin was given no chance, and Mike Perham was totally rubbished before and after he set off. But it gets better.

Andrew also predicts that Jessica has a 13 per cent chance of getting around non-stop, 20 per cent of doing it with stops, and 33 per cent of damage to boat or crew that will stop the voyage.

An experienced sailor, Andrew has "been there, done that" and, at present, is intimately involved with the Volvo Race. But is this risk assessment and sailing by numbers gone mad?

Even the insurance companies are laughing at this statement, offering a full

comprehensive cover on Jessica's boat, through Lloyds, for around five per cent.

Once again people who don't know Jessica are trying to bracket her as an ordinary sailor with a reckless dream. She is far from it.

Sure anything can happen but, contrary to Andrew's assumptions, the boat is prepared perfectly and she has got the experience in all weathers and oceans.

Importantly, she has the right headspace and attitude. Having an accident shows she was human, not hopelessly inexperienced. The captain of the ship also had an accident.

When Jesse Martin returned from his circumnavigation, many of those who said he couldn't do it before he left simply said "he was just lucky".

Well, my money is on Jessica, but then I have inside knowledge. I actually know her, the boat and all her support crew. If she succeeds, I can't wait to read Andrew's next letter to Jessica.

## THE LATE MAIL

With around 500,000 people on Jessica's site every day and up to 2000 comments on each of her blogs, it was put to me by a friend that there is now a small group of 'knockers' standing in the corner of a room somewhere, looking very lonely at the moment. Sure Jessica needs luck, as do the Volvo boats, but she can also make her own... watch this space!

When I decided to help Jessica with the loan of a boat, it was because I could see something in her and the dream. It was also to support the principle of "adventure", especially in young people.

As it turns out, it is probably one of the best things I have ever done. More than once I have been pushed to the brink of tears reading some of the comments from around the world on her blog. If you ever want a lesson in the power of inspiration, or the impact one courageous 16-year-old can have on so many people, then go log on. It is an amazing insight

## SEA SAFETY – THE YOKE'S ON YOU!

While we are on the subject of accidents, there is one common element in them all. Accidents happen when we least expect them. Tragically, we recently lost two great sailors when a fully crewed maxi lucked out.

Hindsight is a cruel thing at times, but in 1984 I introduced one of the first ever inflatable lifejacket/safety harnesses into Australia.

At the boat shows, I would wear one and people would say: "What's that?" I would pull the inflator and they would get a shock. It had a full-face hood, strobe lights and a crutch strap — way ahead of its time.

Now, 25-years on, some sailors still won't wear them at night, when any type of accident could happen. On a fully crewed maxi the risks are ramped up and risk minimisation is everything. We can all learn from accidents.

In 1986, I unsuccessfully tried

to get the world's biggest selling 406 EPIRB into Australia for the first time. Some years later, I attempted the same with the biggest selling short-range man overboard locating devices. Both were mandatory for around-the-world races at the time and both were rejected by 'Australian rule makers', who decided Aussies were different than the rest of the world. Australia would develop its own specifications. Units that were saving lives around the world were no good for us!

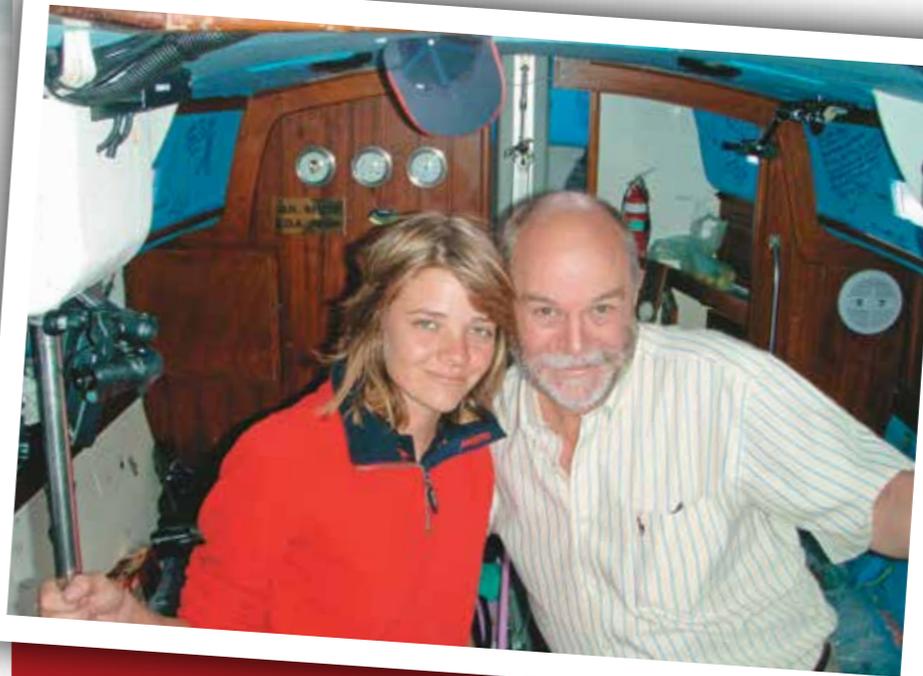
Now I hear that Yachting Australia is going to revamp the sea safety training courses! Apparently, it's no good sticking with the existing RYA/ISAF system. Australians appear to need "special" training.

Looks like we will get our own 'Australian' Yachting Sea Safety Training course, which may not be able to save an Englishman.



(Think Tony Bullimore). So they will have to check your passport when registering to do the course, confirming you are just an Aussie...

Some people might then argue that we keep a register to see if you are worth the cost of saving! Ah, the life of an adventurer!



Opposite top: Contrary to what the knockers say, Jessica's boat, Ella's Pink Lady, is perfectly prepared for a circumnavigation and Lloyd's didn't hesitate in offering full comprehensive cover for around five per cent; Above: Last photo of Jessica with Don in her boat before sailing off on her record run.

into responsible risk taking. There should be more of it.

## THE RHUMB LINE

My first boat was called SKYE, as the McIntyre Clan came from the Isle of Skye in Scotland. I am a Donald. The family crest has sailing ships and *Per Arduis* (through difficulties) as the motto. I don't own a kilt and I always

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wear undies (unless I take them off), so it was a great honour to sail my Bounty Boat in the "Isle of Skye" this month.

It was the occasion of announcing our Bounty Boat voyage title sponsor and having a McIntyre Clan reunion all at the same time. (Find all about it at [www.taliskerbountyboat.com](http://www.taliskerbountyboat.com)).

Talisker Whiskey has a longstanding maritime tradition and has supported many sailing activities in the past. With only six months until we set sail, the prospects of suffering like William Bligh on his epic 3618nm open boat journey are very real and now truly engaging for me and my three crew.

The ship's biscuits have been drying out for nearly nine months and are rock hard, bordering on inedible. I wonder what odds Andrew will give us?