



Second attempt for British ocean rower in Indian Ocean bid

British ocean rower Sarah Outen is to resume her bid to become the first woman to row solo across the Indian Ocean, after a first attempt nearly ended in disaster when strong currents threatened to sweep her into the treacherous Southern Ocean.

The 23-year-old's initial voyage was aborted on March 23, after only 10 days, when the 400-mile detour was compounded by a serious electrical systems failure on-board her boat Serendipity, necessitating an immediate return to port.

Now, with repairs completed and what she refers to as her 'Warm Up Lap' under her belt, she is due to depart the Royal Perth Yacht Club sometime around 8am local time tomorrow morning (11pm BST) and fulfil her ambition of securing up to four new world records when she reaches the Mauritian capital of Port Louis.

"The weather forecasters have told us that conditions will be more favourable this time, with a wide window of easterly wind that should carry her across the current and into the open ocean," said her spokesman Adrian Bell.

"The Leeuwin Current is known for its strength in this part of the ocean but even local sailors who know these waters well were surprised at its strength.

"Sarah's spent the last few days on land, consulting her weather router and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, so that we can better understand this current and make the most of the present weather conditions."

Miss Outen, a graduate of Oxford University, first set her sights on the unattained record after the death of her father, Derek, in 2006, and decided to use the opportunity to raise funds for the charity Arthritis Care in his memory.

“It’s disappointing that I’m not already a few hundred miles nearer to Mauritius,” says Miss Outen, from Oakham, “but the warm-up lap gave me a great opportunity to really put the boat through its paces. I’ve been training in it for months, mainly on Rutland Water but also in sea trials, yet you only really get to know a boat when it’s being properly put through its paces.

“Each hour I was out there got me into the routine of life at sea and increased my confidence about the whole journey, hour by hour. I’m ready for the second assault at these records.”

Miss Outen hopes to reach Port Louis in less than 107 days, thus beating the current record for Indian Ocean rowing set by Briton Simon Chalk in 2003. In addition to being the first woman to complete the crossing, she also hopes to become the youngest rower to make this crossing and the youngest solo rower of any ocean.

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These photographs of Sarah are available hi-res, free-to-access at www.whisper.pr/sarahouten



Sarah Outen, 23 years old, intends to become the first woman to row across the Indian Ocean. Sarah is pictured in a shoot from award-winning contemporary photographer Jude Edgington

Miss Outen on board Serendipity, the six-metre boat built specially for her Indian Ocean voyage. She will keep in touch with her family and support team by satellite phone, and has on-board cameras to record her journey

Additional photographs are available from Getty Images: keyword Sarah Outen