

5th of June 2009

“Beluga Racer” in the grand final

Last leg for race leaders Boris Herrmann and Felix Oehme

CHARLESTON. Beneath grey skies and accompanied by gentle to mild southwesterly breezes, the circumnavigators started the fifth and final leg of the Portimão Global Ocean Race in Charleston/USA yesterday. Boris Herrmann (28) from Kiel and Felix Oehme (27) from Hamburg are since sailing the last 3,440.3 nautical miles of the race towards the Portuguese harbor of destination Portimão with the reassuring, soothing certainty of having already achieved the overall victory. Nevertheless, they and their yacht “Beluga Racer” hope to win the final leg as well, thus intending to be the first among the competitors to set foot ashore in Europe on or about the 22nd of June.

At the time of the start signal, along the Maritime Center in Charleston’s harbor, the Chilean “Desafio de Cabo Hornos” and her crew, Felipe Cubillos and José Muñoz, enjoyed a slight lead. Shortly thereafter, however, the Germans took advantage of a gust and cruised on by the Chileans, who are ranking second in the race as a whole, thus achieving a lead of some 400 meters. With great pride, the Class-40 “Beluga Racer” with its length of 12 meters passed alongside one of her “big sisters”. Already on the day prior to the re-start, it enjoyed the special pleasure of greeting the MV “Beluga Family” during the arrival of the latter vessel, a multipurpose heavy lift project carrier of their primary sponsor, Beluga Shipping GmbH.

The farewell in the harbor city with its historical nautical charms in the State of Carolina was difficult for all those involved – just as it had been in the harbors of the previous legs of the race. The small, but fine field of participants was received with a hearty, warm welcome and very personally attended to during the past two weeks. “Our hosts were just like lovable grandparents to us,” reported Felix Oehme, “we didn’t lack anything at all.” On the other hand, following the morning blessings given by a local reverend, the born native of Luebeck and Boris Herrmann both looked forward to the challenges awaiting them.

As early as the coming weekend, the breezes are expected to significantly expand into robust winds. “A cold front is approaching the east coast of the United States and is expected to run parallel to the Gulf Stream,” that is the reliable prediction of Sven Taxwedel, the meteorologist and routing adviser of the Beluga Shipping GmbH in Bremen. For the crew, it will be important to remain on the foreshore of this cold front, as a new low-pressure system comes into being and fuels the development of advantageous westerly winds during the first portion of this leg.

The regularly updated racetracker and more information are available at www.beluga-racer.com and www.portimaorace.com.

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