

Skip's Storm: What Worked and PS's Comments

SKIP'S LIST OF WHAT WORKED

- ✓ Wearing a headlamp at night, even while asleep, to avoid having to look for a flashlight.
- ✓ Having a fully charged Iridium satellite phone in a waterproof container with the Coast Guard SAR phone number at the ready.
- ✓ Raymarine 1000+ tiller pilot that worked flawlessly in extreme conditions.
- ✓ Carrying a storm staysail that was half the size of the ISAF Offshore Special Regs-mandated storm jib.
- ✓ "Bombproof" hatch boards secured in place with a bungee and safety lanyards, and a main companionway hatch that could be closed and locked from below.
- ✓ Having a cockpit that would empty when filled in 90 seconds, with two 2-inch drains.
- ✓ Si-Tex AIS stand-alone receiver that alerts to ships in the vicinity during periods of decreased visibility in spume and spray.
- ✓ Having a masthead LED tricolor that lights a nearby windex for quick visual wind direction checks.
- ✓ Having a passport in the ditchbag.



Skip's tactics did not call for his trysail. Many sailmakers design a different cut of trysail. (See Practical Sailor, August 2008.)

OBSERVATIONS FROM PS

- ▲ Solo ocean sailing is a risky undertaking, not to be taken lightly.
- ▲ A small, fin-keel boat fitted out and sailed competently to win a race is not necessarily the best boat to singlehand in a gale.
- ▲ Running is a valid storm tactic, but a boat that lies hove-to well can save steering gear and prevent fatigue.
- ▲ A bulletproof belowdecks autopilot can offer reassurance and much needed relief in a gale.
- ▲ A flat, carefully measured and cut trysail that takes into account helm balance in a gale-force winds can offer more tactical options.
- ▲ The added windage of davits, arches, and solar panels can affect helm balance in a gale, particularly on small, fin-keel boats. (Skip noted that the 9 square feet of "sail" created by the solar panels were not a problem in his case.)