

BLAZING SPORTBOATS p. 26

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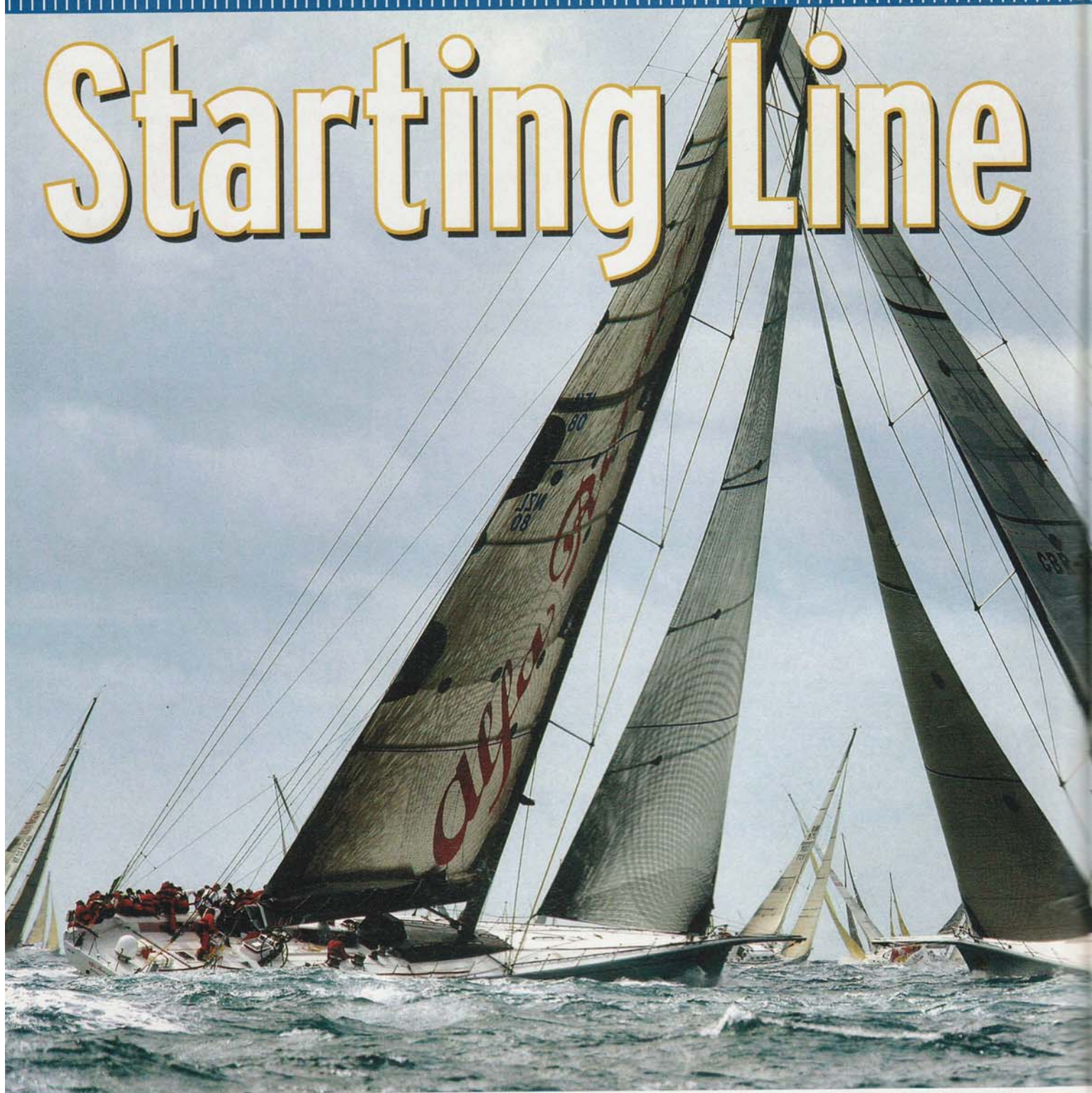
An X-41 One Design sails off East Greenwich, R.I.

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Starting Line



Records and Rigs Fall During Fastnet Race

WITH JUST HOURS REMAINING before the scheduled start of the 605-mile Rolex Fastnet Race the race committee did something it had never done before: postponed England's most famous ocean race. Both private and government forecasters called for the exposed

waters of the western part of the English Channel and the Irish Sea to be at the mercy of two strong low-pressure systems as the bulk of the 300-boat fleet were making its way through, so the committee decided a 25-hour hold was in order.

When the fleet did finally get off the line, with 271 of 300 entries electing to start the race, conditions were still marginal with windspeeds as high as 50 knots, which combined with a short chop in the Irish Sea, made for uncomfortable sailing. As a result, 211

boats retired from the race, many before passing Lands' End. While most were smaller boats, even the professional programs were not immune. The 98-foot canting-keel maxi *Alfa Romeo*, a favorite to break the existing record, retired after tearing a mainsail.

WINDSHIFTS

➤➤ The 2008 TP 52 Med-Cup circuit will include six regattas in four countries, from May through September. The events will follow a standardized six-day format and include up to nine windward-leeward races and two coastal races. www.medcup.org

➤➤ Jim Swartz' *Money Penny* and Udo Schutz' *Container* will be the second and third Storm Trysail Transpac 65s to hit the water, joining Roger Sturgeon's *Rosebud*, which was launched last spring. The three boats will represent the work of three different designers. Farr drew the lines for *Rosebud*, Reichel/Pugh did likewise for *Money Penny*, while *Container* is a Judel/Vrolijk project. www.stp-65.org

➤➤ A year after it was one of just three boats to finish a storm-swept Vineyard Race, Bob and Farley Towse's 66-foot *Blue Yankee* set a new course record of 20h:20m:15s for the 238-mile race from Stamford, Conn., to Buzzards Bay (Mass.) Light Tower and back. www.stamfordyc.com

➤➤ Eleven cities have applied to host the first Summer Youth Olympic Games in 2010. The list includes: Algiers, Algeria; Athens, Greece; Bangkok, Thailand; Belgrade, Republic of Serbia; Debrecen, Hungary; Guatemala City, Guatemala; Moscow; Poznan, Poland; Singapore; and Turin, Italy. The International Olympic Committee will announce its selection in February.

➤➤ Larry Leonard, the founder of Quantum Sails, has joined North Sails and will work within the company's Performance Resource Group. www.northsails.com

➤➤ US SAILING video podcasts are available through iTunes or at www.ussailing.org



LEOPARD 1, ALFA ROMEO 0

Mike Slade's ICAP *Leopard 3* (right) and Neville Crichton's *Alfa Romeo* duel shortly after the start of the Rolex Fastnet Race. The much-anticipated battle between these two canting-keel maxis ended when *Alfa Romeo* retired with a torn mainsail, leaving *Leopard* to set a new course record.

Two other boats at the top of the IRC food chain, Mike Slade's brand-new ICAP *Leopard 3*, a 98-foot, canting-keel Farr design, and *Rambler*, a 90-foot Reichel/Pugh fixed-keel boat owned by American sailor George David, reveled in the tough conditions. *Rambler* rounded Fastnet lighthouse 3 seconds ahead of *Leopard*, but quickly saw that boat-for-boat

lead vanish as *Leopard* cracked sheets and took off. At the finish, it was all about *Leopard*, which broke the Fastnet record, set in 1999, by 8h:50m. *Rambler* crossed the line less than an hour later.

The overall winner on corrected time was Irish sailor Ger

O'Rourke's *Cookson 50*, *Chief-tain*, a canting-keel Farr design, which finished 11h:13m after *Leopard*. American skipper Larry Huntington's *Snow Lion* corrected out for the IRC Zero (A) win, and *Rambler* won the Super Zero class.

—TONY BESSINGER