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# The GLSS Solo Challenger

## May 2017

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2016  
Solo Mac  
Race Committee



Thank you to ALL  
Race Committees  
for their  
dedication!

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### From the Helm:

Good day solo sailors!

So, is your boat in the water? The Great Lakes have seen a warmer winter and less ice this past winter. Do you remember a few years ago when there were icebergs floating around as late as Memorial Day weekend. This year is a little warmer and wetter, still many of our friends are dealing with late snow and cold. BUT, it soon will be gone and your boat will be in the water. Smiles will return to all of us.



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Why the Good day? Getting ready for the Solo Mac, I was looking for my SPOT tracker and suddenly up pops a email with a SPOT message ([noreply@findmespot.com](mailto:noreply@findmespot.com)) from Cole Butterworth in Australia. What a pleasure to see where Cole is sailing and a reminder that our SPOT's work wherever we go. As we have done for the past few years, the GLSS Board of Directors will work with Kattack to provide tracking for all of the GLSS sponsored events. You and your friends will be able to follow our sailors by going to our website when the event starts. And what a year this will be! We start with a bang June 24th with the **Solo Mac Challenges**. Port Huron to Mackinac, Chicago to Mackinac, the Super Macs and the longest freshwater race in the world the Super Mac and Back. July 15th we move to Lake Ontario to do the **Lake Ontario 300 Solo Change**. Then we finish the Challenges with a flurry in August. We start with the **Trans Superior Solo Challenge** on August 5th and end with the **Lake Erie Solo Challenge** on August 26th. Of course that does not end our organized events, September has events on Lake Michigan, Lake Huron and Lake St Clair. Get those SPOTs ready and send in your entry fee and applications. The time to start is now!

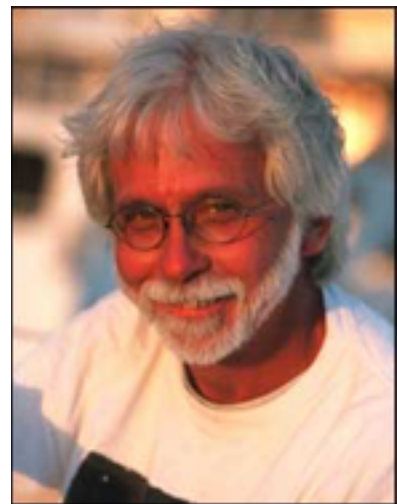
See you on the Lake!  
Ken

Searching articles about safety harnesses and tethers for the winter safety seminars I found this article by Tim Kent. It is an excellent reminder as we start of our sailing season.

## Safety, safety harnesses, and tethers

### By Tim Kent

*Although this is in response to a letter in Scuttlebutt, it hits to the core of a subject that I have spoken about at safety seminars and other meetings over the last three years. I am a trifle passionate about this, due not only to the loss of my friend, and not only to the long conversations I had with my children before starting the Around Alone race about staying clipped to the boat as a promise to them. I am most passionate about this because of all of the suppositions and misinformation about being tethered to the boat that goes around during bar talk presented as fact. Tethers, properly used, are hardly "death straps." I hope you will consider the opinions below. - Tim Kent, Around Alone Race 2002-2003, 2nd place, Open 50 class*



I have raced around the world solo, almost every moment of it clipped onto my boat with a safety harness and tether. I was cautious about

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being on deck, but you can only be so cautious on the foredeck of a boat alone that is traveling at 20+ knots, is awash in heavy water while careening down (marvelous) Southern Ocean waves – staying on board in such situations is mandatory. My friend lost his life less than a week after I started my around the world race, and it caused me to re-think my own safety precautions. Here are the conclusions I came to:

Be attached to the boat all the time. For crewed racers this is less of an issue, but if there is water over the deck in riotous waves, especially at night, there is no shame in being decisive about being clipped on no matter how many people are on board. It is your life we are talking about here. If you are alone on your boat or alone on deck, be clipped to the boat.

The foredeck needs to be escape-proofed. My friend went under the lifelines of his boat. There must be some sort of lashing from the deck, around the middle lifeline to the top and back again that will slow you down if you should slip. Obviously this helps keep sails on board as well.

You must make certain that when you are clipped on, if you were to fall over the side, the attachment point of your harness is not below the toe-rail. This is THE key. If you are over the lifelines with your arms out of the water, you can probably get yourself back on board. It might hurt like hell and be hard as hell, but if your arms are free, you can pull yourself up to the point where you can get a leg out, then the rest of your body out of the water. If you go over the side with your arms under water, even if the boat is moving three or four knots, you can not get back on board. Period. Unless the boat is somehow stopped or a big crew is available to pull you back on board, you will drown. The jacklines required by most rules that allow you to move from the bow to the stern without unclipping are one of those “safety” measures that make you feel secure while they mask their weak points. If you use standard rope or web jacklines, walk to the middle of your boat, reach down and pull up on the jackline. It will deflect upwards, sometimes almost to the top of the lifeline. Then add the length of your tether – usually six feet – to that topmost point, over the top of the lifelines, down to the toerail. I guarantee you that that point will be well below the toerail. That is the point where your chest will be – under water if the boat is heeled over and you are on the low side (probable). Result? You drown.

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You must have a quick-release shackle on the harness end of your tether. I still see some tethers without this feature. I tell my crew for distance races that if they show up with a tether without a quick-release shackle on one end, I will cut it in half and send them off to the boat store for a new one with a clean conscience. When I found myself clipped on, trapped under the cockpit of a 50 foot boat that capsized after losing its keel, I just pulled my quick-release shackle with one hand and swam free. I was holding the ditch kit in my other hand...and I did not want to let it go. One way or another, that quick-release shackle saved my life.

None of this has to be scary. Clip on. Use spectra webbing or line for jacklines and lash them in place with spectra lashing. These will not deflect nearly as much as "standard" jacklines and any good rigger or companies like APS or Layline can hook you up with spectra jacklines easily. Try to rig jacklines or attachment points close to the middle of the boat. Don't be afraid to unclip and reclip to keep yourself in the safety zone where you will still be hooked up above the attachment point if you go over the lifelines. Double your tether around the jackline back to your harness to shorten it up if you are at the pointy end in rough weather. Set up jacklines so they stop you before the tether could leave you streaming off the stern. Don't be macho – clip on when you are on the boat alone or on deck alone ALL THE TIME.

This is an emotional subject and there are other viewpoints. These worked for me for a solo trip across the Atlantic and a solo circumnavigation. There are other opinions and other approaches. The most important thing is to think safety all the time.

Stay on your boat. Please. If not for yourself, then for all the other sailors who love your sport and would hate to lose you. For your friends. For your family.

Tim Kent

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## ***2017 Safety seminars have enthusiastic audiences throughtout the Great Lakes!***

Groups of GLSS sailors fan out all over the Great Lakes to encourage sailors to improve the safety skills.



*Dave Rearick at Larsen's Marina talking about long distance sailing and the ecology of the oceans*

In Illinois, seminars were held in three different locations.

The first was at the Strictly Sail show at McCormack Place in January. Alan Veenstra and Dave Rerick were presentors there.

That was followed by the Seminars held at



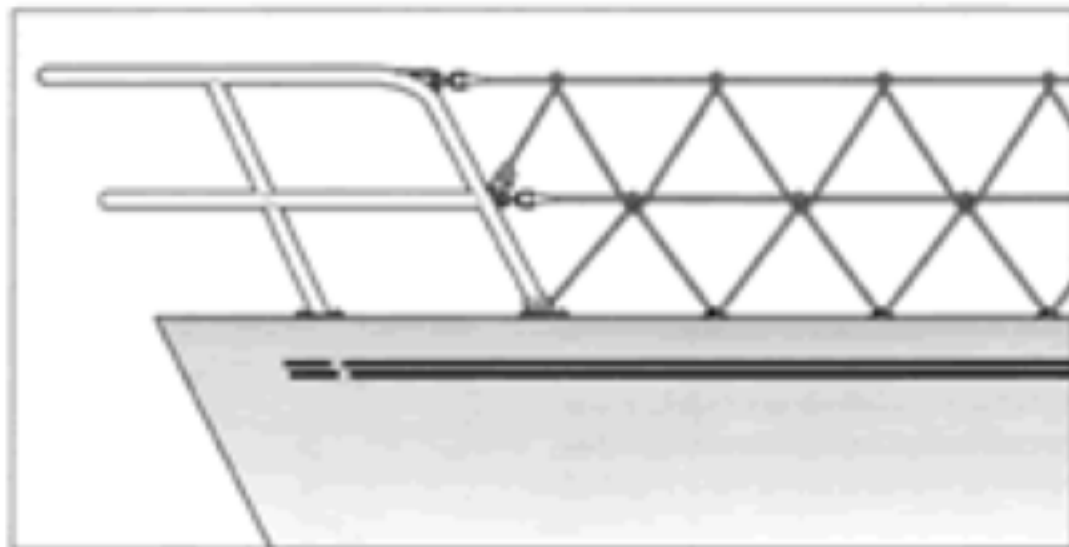
*Rick McLarens slide discussing the dangers of only relying on electronics.*

*He also emphasized how lifeline lacings help to keep skippers and crews onboard.*

## Sole Reliance on Chartplotter:



## Lifeline Lacings



3/14/2016

[www.solosailors.org](http://www.solosailors.org)

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Crowley's on the far south side of Chicago near the Indiana border. Rick McLaren & Ken Verhaeren presented there.

The last seminar in Illinois was at Larsen Marine where John Hoskins, Dave Rerick and Ken Verhaeren covered safety and sailing topics.



***Further south by Lake Erie, members got together at one of their clubs to present a Friday night mini seminar. Lease Schock reported the following.***

“Our club though the winter, host mini seminars on Friday nights. Member Rob Buger and I put on a GLSS information program with a question and answer at the end. We had 30 people in attendance. Rob and I had brought our rear Commodore to the AGM and he was impressed with our organization. We had three new guys that have said they are going for the Lake Erie race this year and a opportunity to have our own single handed section in our clubs island race in July.

**In Michigan we had two seminars, one on the east coast and one on the west coast. In the picture to the right, Elisabeth Reichlingspeaking to a group of sailors at Torresen's Marina.**



Jeff Neuhalfen organized the Detroit area Safety Seminar. Jeff Golding did a slide presentation on what it takes to do a Solo Challenge while Joey Baker talked about the experience of doing the Super Mac & Back 3 years ago. With many GLSS members present, a large group of sailors enjoyed a lively discussion.

### Step #8: Play Some "What-If" Games

- ✓ Practice while you have help
- ✓ Think through many scenarios
- ✓ Reduce sail early
- ✓ It is a Challenge not a race
- ✓ Keep a cool head



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Of course in our fastest growing area, Lake Ontario, Brent Hughes runs a regular “Flying Road Show” hitting yacht clubs around the Toronto area. The Lake Ontario Offshore Racing Circuit did 3 racing tips programs at the beginning of April. Brent is spreading the word that sailing solo is fun and safe.



## ***Have you ever looked at the GLSS Board Minutes?***

One of the ways the GLSS Board of Directors try to keep our members informed is by posting the most current minutes from our board meeting. This is an excellent way for members to be up to date with what is happening. Sometimes the meetings are loaded with issues and at other times it is pretty quiet. The board has just completed a pretty busy time. Remember the question about honoring the sailor with the fastest corrected time in our Challenges? What happened with that? I can tell you that there were strong opinions on both sides of the issue and each side had good points. We actually had a number of members pay their current dues so that their opinions could be heard and count in the members advisory vote. The results of this issue will be found in the minutes of the April meeting. It will be posted after the May meeting (May 1st) when the minutes are approved by the board.

A board member also brought an issue to the April meeting that concerns the awards presented to sailors participating in the Super Mac and Back. The board member was contacted by a member who felt we should change the number of medallions presented to a skipper who has completed the Super Mac & Back. That member's concerns were brought up to the GLSS board for discussion. That is part of the board's commitment to the membership. Your concerns will be addressed. Again, the results can be found in the April minutes [www.solosailors.orgminutes.php](http://www.solosailors.orgminutes.php)

### ***SO, what do you think?***

As our members prepare for their various sailing events, some are being strongly encouraged to take a SAFETY at SEA seminar in order to compete in certain races. The CREWED MAC races says, "We strongly encourage all competitors to attend a US Sailing Safety at Sea Seminar as well as other appropriate training for offshore racing".

Should the GLSS add the same kind of recommendation to our sailing instructions? Or, should we go a step further and require it for all entries in a GLSS CHallenge? Should it be just any new entries into a GLSS Challenge and grandfather in all current members? ***SO, what do you think?***  
send responses to  
[verhaerk@AOL.com](mailto:verhaerk@AOL.com)

# SOLO MAC CHALLENGE

ARE YOU IN?

JUNE 24TH START

THE MAC , SUPER MAC

SUPER MAC & BACK



***A late entry fee of \$100.00 in U.S. funds shall be required for any entry received***

***after May 20, 2017. Non-GLSS member applications shall not be accepted after May 31, 2017. Entries for current GLSS members shall be accepted until June 10, 2017 however any entry after May 31, 2017 shall have a late entry fee of \$150.00.***

Go to the GLSS website and then to Race Documents to sign up