

Tragedy on the Adriatic

13 boats out of the 20-membered Adriatic Challenge fleet took part on its first regatta, on Mira Mare Cup on the 25th of April, 2005. The „Bavaria 42 Match” type boats sailed from Bozsava to Vodice. In the 30-40 knots yugo of the boats were cruising to the finish for a long time when they received MAYDAY call from one of the boats.

As it turned out, the keel came off and the boat capsized in the night around 10 o'clock 2 kilometers from the south coast of Murter. There were 6 people on board who fall to the 13 Celsius degree sea. The boats nearby went to help them immediately and could save 5 men, the sixth however, lost his life.

On the 2nd day of the tragedy the boat was tug into the harbor of Tribunj. The hole in the place of the keel let draw the conclusion that the hull was ripped (out). Later investigations lead to the fact that the keels on all of the 20 boats of the fleet were stirred. Now official investigations are taking place.

But what could happened with the keel? Because whatever could happened, the last thing what a boat could leave is her keel. But for us the most shocking was the moment in Vodice when we saw – and you can see the same on the pictures – the lot of gaps in most of the Bavaria Match 42s' bilges. The lack of some backing plates - which lead away the tension - was the most interesting revelation. Whether it was the part of the unique construction according as the unchanged type boats aren't the same, so we can find sometimes three backing plates inside the bilge (I think this was the originally idea), but sometimes only two therefrom. It is well apparent on the attached pictures.



three backing plates



two backing plates, why just two?

We don't know whether the capsized boat had all of these backing plates but irrespectively of this, we can make a shrewd guess as to the accident happened as follows: In the midst of the big waves (2 meters high) the hull slowly had separated from the boat's ribs, where the keel had been hanging, than it was nothing to hold it any more, at this moment the first part let off and tugged the rear end of the keel. This is our unofficially version, our opinion by the grounds of what we saw on the boats.

Circumstances: The participants reported other about the conditions of the regatta – supposedly it's depended on the routine, the brave and the adventurous. The wind was blowing steady 36 knots.

According to the Beaufort Scale this is a gale. The sailors used typically the second reef and small jibs. Some of the sailors surrendered the regatta before the incident.

The stage Bozsava – Vodice was very prolonged and they have to cruising all along in strong wind. Don't forget, this is an amateur and not a transatlantic regatta so the participants haven't got too much routine.

The lock: There were other problems with these boats near (by) the keel. The sailors told us and we suggested, that the Bavaria's cabin doors weren't tested in choppy conditions because those had been simply closed and nobody could open it from outside with the clench anymore only with a fork. (The incident happened in that cabin where they stored their life-jackets.

The rudder: three from the twelve boats turned into beyond control for short time as those rudders went wrong in the strong winds. Allegedly a bolt wasn't strained enough and it could come loose. (kilazulhatott). After a Hungarian skipper this problem befell not the first time at the Bavaria, but that time wasn't caused accident.

More pictures are available here:

http://www.sailing.hu/galeriak/versenyek_esemenyek_2005/mira_mare_kupa/1/



the leak

The official press release of the Adriatic Challenge from the boat accident in Croatia

According to the boat accident on the 25th of April many wrong information came to light. The Adriatic Challenge, the owner of the boat which lost its keel and capsized, summarizes the exact course of the event as the following:

The Adriatic Challenge business enterprise was founded by 3 Hungarian businessmen and sailor: Róbert Láng, József Gál and Lajos Gallasz. The company let the owned 20 boats to charter for regattas, for companies' programs, for team building trainings.

After long analysis, the owners choose the type Bavaria 42 Match for establishing their fleet, because this type fit the best for their activity, so for the competitive and adventurous sailing. Choosing the producer was according to the capacity, skill and reputation of the manufacturer. The Bavaria 42 Match appeared on the market in January 2004, and it proved to be good on several regattas since then. The Adriatic Challenge ordered the 20 boats of its fleet from the 2nd largest boat-producing company, from the German Bavaria in December 2004. The boats were manufactured according to the strict German and European quality standards. At delivery all of the boats had the appropriate certificate that proved the sterling usage.

The boats were launched at Koper, from which they were transported to the main harbor, to Biograd by Croatian and Hungarian crew. On the way, the keel of one of the boats was damaged at the harbor of Umagi, but the damage was corrected, so the boat arrived to Biograd in perfect condition. This boat did not participate on the Mira Mare Cup, during the whole event she was in the harbor. There was not any other damage on none of the boats of the fleet, so the Adriatic Challenge started the season with

excellent boats. In the middle of April there was an open day, on which the whole fleet was tried out (as they were moving on a club-regatta.)

13 out of the 20 boats participated on the Mire Mare Cup. It is important to mention that the Adriatic Challenge did not actually organize the regatta; the company only let the boats for chartering.

The regatta started on Saturday. On Monday there was strong wind, but the weather conditions were normal for the completion of the stage. The accident, the coming off of the keel happened at Monday night, couple minutes after 10 o'clock. The boat capsized and the 6 members of the crew fall into the water. 5 of them were luckily saved, the 6th died. The cause of death has been unknown yet; the police investigations are still going on.

After the accident the Cup ended, the Adriatic Challenge called its boats back to the harbour of Vodice and Biograd, where the Croatian Naval Office has already started investigations by examining the boats.

The advance inspection detected that 7 boats have obvious, visible construction lesion around the keel. In the course of the first technical control proved that the failures have the same type and denote structural weaknesses. The injury of the boat could originate in designing or producing failure.

The definite technologic controls and expertise are under way. Beyond the Croatian authority, the Adriatic Challenge and the insurer's independent professionals also looking for the accident's reason.

In the name of the Adriatic Challenge we would like to condole with the family of the departed on the Mira Mare Cup

Róbert Láng
Managing Director