

## **US Sailing Awards Medal to Sailors for Rescuing Crew of Sinking Boat During Offshore Race**

NEWPORT, RI (September 13, 2024) – The US Sailing Safety at Sea Committee has awarded the Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal to the skippers and crew of two sailing vessels, Ceilidh and Banter, who rescued competitors off a life raft from the sailboat Alliance that sank during an offshore race.

The medals were presented at a ceremony on Friday, September 13<sup>th</sup> at the Newport Yacht Club in Newport, R.I., by Captains Jonathan Kabek and Sheila McCurdy, representing the US Sailing Safety at Sea Committee. Both are US Sailing certified Safety at Sea moderators, leading hands-on training that incorporates lessons learned from incidents such as these so that others may learn from them.

The incident happened in the early morning of Sunday, June 23, 2024, during the Newport to Bermuda Race, sponsored by the Cruising Club of America. At 0248, the racing yacht S/V Alliance, a 40-foot J122, hit an unidentified submerged object causing flooding from the vicinity of the rudder and catastrophic steering system damage.

“There was fiberglass everywhere. There was no way to repair it,” says S/V Alliance co-skipper Mary Martin.

At approximately 2:50 a.m., two 40-foot racing yachts responded to a Mayday call from S/V Alliance. These were S/V Ceilidh, skippered by Jim Coggeshal of Dartmouth, MA, and S/V Banter, skippered by Matt Gimple of Pawcatuck, CT.

Both yachts were on scene about 3:30 a.m., about 40 minutes after S/V Alliance hit the submerged object. Despite having two electric dewatering pumps each capable of pumping over 4,000 gallons per hour, the water level on board S/V Alliance continued to rise. With S/V Ceilidh and S/V Banter in close proximity, S/V Alliance made the decision to abandon ship and conduct a life raft transfer.

While transfer to S/V Ceilidh was conducted first, the life raft’s upper ring punctured during the transfer, preventing additional crew transfer to S/V Banter. The transfer was completed at 4:06 a.m. The last tracker position report of Alliance was at 5:30 a.m. when she completed sinking.

With 16 aboard S/V Ceilidh, which carried only a 10-person life raft, S/V Banter acted as “buddy boat” for the remainder of the race. This was reassuring to both the crews of S/V Alliance and S/V Ceilidh, since the additional 2K pounds of weight aboard stressed Ceilidh. Both S/V Ceilidh and S/V Banter were well organized in their response, understood the situation, and responded without hesitation resulting in a successful life raft transfer in the middle of the Gulf Stream in challenging conditions and most importantly, no injury or loss of life.

The co-skippers of S/V Alliance, Eric Irwin of Mystic, CT, and Mary Martin of Newport, RI nominated their rescuers for these prestigious medals.

“For their situational awareness, watch keeping, superior seamanship and outstanding support of fellow racers in need resulted in the rescue of nine sailors on a sinking vessel. US Sailing is pleased to award the Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal to the skippers and crew of both S/V Ceiledh and S/V Banter,” said presenter Jonathan Kabek.

The Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal is awarded to any person who rescues or endeavors to rescue any other person from drowning, shipwreck, or other perils at sea within the territorial waters of the United States, or as part of a sailboat race or voyage that originated or stopped in the U.S. The medal was established in 1990 by friends of the late Mr. Hanson, an ocean-racing sailor from the Chesapeake Bay, with the purpose of recognizing significant accomplishments in seamanship and collecting case studies of rescues for analysis by the Safety at Sea Committee of US Sailing for use in educational and training programs. Any individual or organization may submit a nomination for a Hanson Rescue Medal.

Visit the [US Sailing Hanson Rescue Medal website](#) for more information about these awards, including nomination form instructions and guidelines.

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## **About US Sailing**

The United States Sailing Association (US Sailing), certified by the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee as the National Governing Body for the sport of sailing in the United States, is dedicated to leading, advancing, supporting, and ensuring integrity in sailing at every level. Founded in 1897, US Sailing, now serving over 40,000 members as well as over 1,500 yacht clubs and sailing centers, offers training and certifications for sailors, instructors, and race officials, oversees national championships, manages offshore ratings, conducts regional and national events, and spearheads initiatives to increase accessibility. US Sailing also leads the training and development of the US Sailing Team for the Olympic Games and high-performance international competitions, providing comprehensive financial, logistical, coaching, technical, fitness, marketing, and communications support, as well as managing the Team USA athlete selection procedures for the Olympic Games. More at [www.ussailing.org](http://www.ussailing.org).