



LOUIS VUITTON PACIFIC SERIES
January 30TH to February 14TH 2009
AUCKLAND

Sail with your heart... win with your mind

Press Release
Monday 2nd February, 2009

For immediate Release

Greek Challenge fights tough but loses to Luna Rossa

Auckland, NZ – Monday, fourth day of the Louis Vuitton Pacific Series, was set from the beginning to be challenging for Greek Challenge. The first ever America's Cup team from Greece faced Luna Rossa, the Louis Vuitton finalist in Valencia in 2007.

Both teams were set for a long wait before they started racing. The starting gun was scheduled to be fired at 11am but the waters of Auckland's harbor were flat with hardly any sign of breeze. Only after waiting for almost 4 hours and moving further north were race organizers able to set a course.

The start took place under a steady easterly breeze of around 10 knots. The right side of the course was slightly favored and both teams fought hard for the committee boat end of the starting line. Gavin Brady got it but had to pay the price of starting slowly. Luna Rossa was able to get ahead with an early advantage.

The first beat was initially a long drag race on port tack to the left side of the course. Greek Challenge was behind in the first cross and despite the ever-improving teamwork, the Greeks rounded the first weather mark 27 seconds behind the Italians. During the rest of the race, Greek Challenge stayed on Luna Rossa's trail but, unfortunately, was unable to pass them, crossing the finish line only 54 seconds behind the Italian yacht.

According to Gavin Brady, the New Zealander helmsman of the Greek team, "this was probably the best race of the team so far. Crew work was excellent; gybes were fantastic, even better than Luna Rossa's. Unlike the first race against Alinghi, Luna Rossa was never able to distance itself and Greek Challenge was 1 or 2 errors away from winning. One bad spinnaker hoist or another crew fault could have allowed us make headway on the deficit we had. It wasn't impossible to get back on the game but Luna Rossa sailed flawlessly".

Tuesday is the final day of Round Robin 1 and Greek Challenge will have to face Team Origin, unbeaten so far. With triple Olympic medalist Ben Ainslie on the helm and an Olympic and America's roster on the British yacht, Greek Challenge will certainly have a very tough opponent.

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Photo credit: Pierre Orphanidis / Greek Challenge

Images

High resolution photos can be downloaded from the media gallery on www.greekchallenge.com