

SC 50 Adrenalin: Transpac Boat Log

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Transpac 2015—Here we go!

Thursday 16:27

Del was on the boat with the McLube when Jenn, John, Joseph, and Kirk arrived on a bright Thursday morning. The wind had started to tickle the water on our ride over from the hotel in Long beach. We left the dock with little ceremony, barely a head count; as we're only eight, there wasn't much to count. Del was at the helm as we drove out of the Marina. As we passed the lighthouse we took a series of selfies.

There was a slight swell when we got out into the ocean with about six knots of breeze—already more than we'd expected given the most recent wind predictions. We were the second boat out to the start line; a Swan 61 (?) had beaten us to it. We sat rocking around for about an hour before we put up the main at noon. The jib went up around 12:30. We had the #1—as worn as it is, we wanted to wait as long as we could before putting it to work.

The wind was up to 11 knots or so by the time we went into sequence. The fancy boats were out; between tacking out boat, it was quite a show to watch our competitors. The RC set a starting line about a mile long, giving the fleet plenty of room. We had a handful of tacks in the pre-start, and then we were off. We were 2/3 down the line toward the pin end. Looking up, watching the fleet sail together, setting of—I'm sure for many of them—on their first trip across the Pacific, it was exhilarating.

When we could, we split off up the coast as the fleet headed on starboard toward Catalina. We had “local knowledge” that said with the breeze at the angle it was, we should go up the coast and then take a left. At this point it doesn’t seem to have paid off, but there’s still time and it’s a long race ahead.

Thursday 17:08

The wind piped up half way to Catalina and we put up the #3, but still weren’t able to clear the island as we didn’t get the lift we were supposed to get coming across. Had to pull the sails off the rail to do several tacks. Now we’ve got the jib top up, on port, and Gail is working on dinner while John and Andy try to wrestle the #1 back in its bag.

Thursday 23:22

As the sun fell, the sky was clear yielding a heap of stars, with the soft glow of San Diego off to the left. It's not as cold as it could be, not at all as cold as the Mac race was the first night, and I'm thankful for that. Although I am wearing my new boots and happy to have them.

We were moving eight to nine knots with winds between 10 – 12 knots. The horizon was dark with clouds that slowly overtook us. And then the wind started to shift dramatically with every puff. Staring into the dark at a bank of red lights was challenging at the helm, and ever so nauseating. We're taking 30 minute shifts at the helm; that's about all any one driver can stand. The word from the navigator is to keep boat speed up and not worry too much about direction. We're sailing about 200 degrees, trying to hold 8.5 knots.

There's been a bit of growing pains with the shift changes, as we all try to figure out how much time we need to get dressed, what works for sleeping, how to organize our gear. Greg has already lost his headlamp and glasses, although he's on the helm now doing a decent job... as I write I feel the boat speed up and gain heel. Just heard Joseph (now working the traveler) say, "We could do this all night long." Well, hopefully not, we've only got a few minutes left on our shift.

Thursday 23:42

Wind is down again to five knots and veering.

Friday 12:38

The windseeker is up again. Wind was down to just over a knot at the lowest I saw, and we're doing 180 degree tacks. We are not looking forward to seeing our tracks. The only thing we have that keeps us going is that we're pretty sure the whole fleet is in the same situation. Gail on the helm; she's got the touch to keep the boat moving in the light breeze. It's filled in now more or less within our line of site, and we tacked again to stay in it. Gently moving forward at a couple of knots.

While I was sleeping—which was quite easy to do, woke up at one point and warily glanced at the watch only to see it was 9:11—Greg apparently went for a swim to remove some kelp from the keel. Gail is now standing on his skivvies at the helm while Greg snores on the upper starboard side bunk.

I missed the oatmeal and cantaloupe for breakfast but Gail had some nice sandwiches for me when I got up at noon. We're all struggling to keep hydrated and enough electrolytes in the system. Brought up the peanut butter pretzel bits, and one of the biggest hits so far has been the chocolate covered ginger pieces. Hopefully we've got enough to last us until we're really cookin' downwind.

Friday 14:25

Wind back down again, creeping along with John at the helm. Eating for the sake of eating. Black cherry barbecue pork jerky is better than it sounds.

Friday 14:30

Getting out the fishing poles. In search of sushi.

Friday 15:15

Joseph has the line in the water; it's quite an impressive contraption. Del at the helm. Wind increasing slightly and building swells—that bodes well for the motivation. All quiet down below, except for my typing, which I hope doesn't bother people too much. But especially in this light wind, I appreciate the opportunity to write.

The water is a rich royal blue, except for in the shadow of the sails where it's like midnight. Haven't seen much wildlife—a few whales approaching Catalina, the sound of a few distant seals—but last night our wake was turning up the phosphorescents in the water. Every now and then we see a tiny sailing jellyfish, but other than that the sea is all quiet. Our direction continues to vacillate with the shifty winds the main goal is to stay moving, in just about any direction except back toward California.

Friday 21:23

Still painful sailing. Wind shifting from four to eight knots, and a lot more north than we'd like to be going. Yesterday afternoon Greg gave Del the terrible news that we weren't even laying the Farallones. It's not quite that bad now, sailing at about 280 degrees... but still.

Boat starting to heel. Feels like Del's got some wind. As we settle into our second night, we've gotten into more of a rhythm. Gail served fettuccine alfredo for dinner—excellent. In the afternoon just before shift change, a pod of dolphins came to play. They were big guys, up to six feet long. I gave up the helm to Greg so I could grab my camera and ran to the bow. They swam along with us for several minutes; I got a couple of great shots.

The news from shore is that no one has more than three to four knots of breeze. Will be interesting at roll call tomorrow.

Saturday 03:26

A competitor was spotted on the horizon a couple hours ago at 11:00, he's now moved to about 2:30—this bodes well not only for our progress, but for Del's motivation. Of course, the wind has now died again and we're autotacking back and forth at barely a knot.

At the end of my last watch, Greg told me earlier in the day they had come across a group of whales that included at least one huge orka. The whales he saw did not have a humpback, and when they dove, they dove without the huge tail flop we're used to seeing in the Bay.

No phosphorescents tonight, but that also could be because we don't have enough wake to stir them up? Windseeker up.

Saturday 05:43

It's amazing how fast three knots feels when it's this glassy. Dropped the windseeker and put up the staysail. Spent an hour where our only achievement was keeping the boat pointed in the right direction. Slowly crawled back up to just over a knot, finally got consistent four knots of breeze with just shy of two knots of boat speed so we put the windseeker back up. Crawling along. Wind is at 40 degrees true, hoping for a couple extra knots of breeze so we can put up the A1. News from shore is that the whole fleet is in the same situation, so at least we're not dropping out the back. Pressing slowly forward.

Saturday 09:41

I woke up about 50 minutes ago and didn't believe I had three hours to go on my off watch. They set the first kite on starboard, and then gybed to port. Kirk is asking us to come up 10 degrees, allegedly that will point us right at Hawaii, although that's an awful long layline to call!

Saturday 09:47

Peeled to the Ullman A2. There are apparently some whales off to port, although I haven't seen them. The swell is getting a little weird, a south swell hitting a north swell. Is that Dolores vs. the Typhoon?

We seem to be in a pretty good rhythm now. Maneuvers don't require so far calling everyone out, but extra hands are always appreciated. If it holds like this we'll have several more days of moderate and pleasant sailing. This would be great. Anything slower would be not so great. Anything faster, well, that's still an unknown.

Saturday 10:07

The birthday boy is on the helm! From Kirk: "It's not every day you get to drive a boat with the kite up in the middle of the Pacific!"

Saturday 16:09

We're trucking along with the A2 at over target boat speed, but now up to 12 knots, need to switch out sails. Going to the A3, on a hot reach headed west! Most of us have had showers

in an effort to empty the starboard tank since we're on port and have a lot of heel. A heck of a better problem to have than the drifting we did yesterday and last night! Andy will be naked for the peel!

Saturday 18:17

The peel was delayed in time for Andy to get dressed. But when we did finally do it, we had the same if not better boat speed, and a lot more comfortable angle of heel—that helped for serving Kirk's birthday dinner of beef stroganoff, red wine, and dessert of brownies, ice cream, and strawberries. We sang happy birthday and presented him with his present, his very own hula outfit, which he gracefully put on and did a little dance to "Sail Away" at the helm.

Today has been a good day. Knowing that the fleet isn't entirely out of reach and having some wind has certainly lifted spirits all around. And showers have helped too. We're sailing at 8 – 10 knots with the A3 and it's a lot easier to trim. Will be better going into tonight. John and Andy have a bet on to see who can make it to Hawaii without using the head—Joseph and I are glad to be on an opposite shift as we predict they could become rather grumpy sailors as the days wear on.

Saturday 21:33

We thought our first squall was coming on and moved all the sails below decks, but it turned out to be much ado about nothing. The sky was cloudy though, but now clearing above to reveal a night sky that looks a little unfamiliar—at least to the untrained eye.

We've still got the A3 up on port gybe on a hot reach. Winds topping out in the high 16s, with boat speeds vacillating between 8 – 11, which seems low but is above target so what can you do. It's our first night with the kite up, and the glow tape isn't as bright as I would have hoped, but it does help. With the wave sets and puffs—not to mention the hot angle—we've got the kite locked down and trimming to the puffs with the main traveler.

It will be hard driving tonight I think as we all settle in to this new mode. I don't expect to drive too much in this tonight, but we'll see. I did more than an hour stretch this afternoon and it went pretty well. I think we're all getting more comfortable on the helm and figuring out how to make the boat go fast, I'm just a little behind the guys in the learning curve.

Sunday 11:09 (Joseph)

Frustrating night. It got really light some time after midnight; they switched to the A1 and had a real mess of lines. By the time all was said and done, the wind shifted as expected, and we gybed onto starboard in a light, six to eight knots of breeze. Change of watch at 03:00 hours brought with it our first squall. It was very light, continuing at six to eight

knots of breeze and moderate rain for about an hour. After the rain passed, we drifted in about 2.5 knots of breeze for about an hour: The dreaded after-squall wind hole. In retrospect, we probably should have gybed back onto port as soon as it started raining. But since we had no idea where the squall was coming from and we had just gybed onto starboard, that would have been a difficult decision to make. Lesson learned. Always gybe onto...

Eventually the wind increased to about 13 – 15 knots. Switched to the A3 (to stay northerly), then the A4 (to run a bit deeper). This morning's position report showed that a couple of boats had gone north of us yesterday. Yesterday, we were somewhat concerned about being the most northerly boat, so we headed south to consolidate and cover the competition, but were still feeling pretty comfortable about our position to the north. Today, it seems that the northerly position has been vindicated, and we are now basically in the middle of the fleet from a north-south perspective, and slightly behind everyone else, but definitely within touch.

Sails are stacked on the starboard side again. Discussed stowing the sails below at night to keep the deck clear. With the cluster\$@#& last night, at least the deck had serendipitously cleared of all the stacked sails in anticipation of a squall that didn't end up happening. A good lesson to learn.

Sunday 14:25

The word is we're climbing back up in the fleet. Have the A4 up, cookin' now. John on the helm for over an hour, continued to break his own speed records. Hit 14.7 at the top end, but not before Andy gave into his contest and tossed over his first paper bag. John finally gave the helm over to me and went for his own first bag. With the boat significantly lighter and the puffs continuing to increase, I was able to smash John's records, first at 15.0, then 15.5. Kirk on the helm now, I have no expectation that my record will stand for long, but fun to set. Told Kirk I'd trim for him if he really wanted to go for speed. But with the A4 trimmed in tight and the spinnaker staysail up and trimming the main for puffs, we're really rocking along and having fun.

Down below, it's muggy and warm, but all quiet. The off watch is getting a gentle rocking. Gail says leftover beef stroganoff for dinner, there's no complaints on that one. With this kind of sailing, this day's going by fast. What will night four bring us? With gray skies all around, probably better not to think about it.

Sunday 17:23

Was about to sit down and write about how Kirk smashed my record with a 16.1, then Del took the helm and posted several 16.0s in an hour and a half of driving. Pretty sure he's

spent now! Greg came on watch and Kirk was up, so Joseph took the helm; Greg took over the trim and Kirk on the main traveler... I was spent having been going just about nonstop since 12:30.

Within about three minutes of taking the helm Joseph posted a 16.6! I went down to write about it and had barely buckled my seatbelt at the nav station—it's a bit of a wild ride down here—when I hear, “Jenn we need your help!” I rush up to see that Greg has gotten himself in an override on the kite winch. I said, “Can’t I leave you boys alone for a minute???”

Well we got the kite sheet sorted and then I taped an extra knife up on the wheel stand. The guys are riding along well now posting sustained 15s. Feeling good as we push hard to try and catch up to the competition. How long we can keep it up is the question, I think a lot of the motivation is the expectation that it will die off a bit in the evening, but we’ll see. This is now the test of how good we are—not can we handle the boat, but how long can we sustain and sail hard.

Sunday 20:00 (Gail)

Crew settling in to the watch routine now. Hot bunking with red lights at night. The boat is healing with a log of wild motion but all are healthy and seem to be having a great time.

Before we left California Joseph suggested we use small brown biodegradable bags for our toilet paper and discard them after each use. He even brought the bags aboard. All crew agreed to follow the protocol. But this practice has elicited much conversation. Who is using the most paper bags and who isn’t using any at all. The girls naturally use more, but since they’ve had to endure comments from the crew after tossing the bags from the cockpit, they now throw them directly into the sea through the head port. All this brown bag discussion naturally leads to conversations about bowel habits: Who has, and who hasn’t. Two crewmembers had a bet on who can hold out the longest. Maybe the whole trip! As the night progresses the conversation really goes south with jokes about *Wild Oats XI* following our paper bag trail or the sea creatures picking at the bags only to discover their contents. More stories are sure to come.

Monday 10:08

I woke up after three good hours of much-needed sleep to the sound of another douse—got a front-row view from the starboard lower berth as Kirk and Del pulled in the A2 after the boys upstairs set the Code 0. And—the best thing to wake up to, the news that we’re climbing in the fleet and all our effort in the past 24 hours is paying off. It’s been a wild and hard ride.

We went into the evening carrying the A4, moving the pole more and more forward. As we got up for the 12:00 to 03:00 shift, we realized that if we want to sail that hot, we ought to get the tack of the kite off the pole and back to the boat, allowing us to drive higher and keeping the luff of the kite tight in the disturbed sea state. Del and I had two conflicting ideas about how to accomplish that task, and subsequently blew the topping lift off the pole—the root of just about every @*%&-up is lack of communication.

However, not all was lost, or really, even that much of a problem. Del ascertained that the soft loop that the topper clips to was in fact on its way out anyway and we were better off finding out now rather than in 30 knots of breeze going downwind through the Kaiwi Channel with huge swells. After several frustrating moments trying to get the topper back (it was floating itself in loops around the shrouds on the low side) that required Del to devise a new tool out of a spare batten and the top of a coat hanger and Jenn to climb onto the pole to reach (tethered of course Mom!), we got it back and proceeded with repairing the pole. We also were able to accomplish our secondary goal of getting the reaching strut off the top of the lifelines, however at this hard reach now, we won't be using it for a while anyway.

Just before I went to bed, we called John up to help us with a kite change, down to the A3. All went beautifully except that the topping lift, which had been led back to the end of the pole for safekeeping, had somehow gotten wrapped around the kite halyard. Rather than douse the kite on the deck quick and unwrapping the topper, John performed extensive acrobatic acts to get the topper where it was supposed to be.

In the sauna down below, Gail and I repacked the A3 and then for the last 15 minutes of my shift I went to fly the kite wearing my sports bra and PFD. When I did go to sleep, I must have fallen asleep hard, because I never heard them peel to the A2.

And now with the (daily) mileage report: Day 1 – 99 miles, Day 2 – 40 miles (mostly heading toward the Farallons), Day 3 – 148 miles, Day 4 – 248 miles. We're within reach of picking off *J World*, currently eight nautical miles ahead. Joseph says our goal should be to pick off one boat per day to get on the podium by the finish. Good plan says we!

Monday 10:38 (Joseph)

We peeled from the A3 to the A2 this morning because the wind was kind of light—around 8 – 10 knots. Had contemplated the Code 0, but for some reason ended up with the A2. Objective was to sail high (~110 TWA), and the A2 just wasn't cutting it. Too full, foot in the water, not pointing high enough. Andy and I were betting how long it would take before we would get rid of the A2. I guessed two hours. Within 30 minutes, we had the Code 0 up. I think Andy won that one. The 0 is the right sail. Good pointing, good speed. Sailing at about

100 – 110 TWA in 11 knots of breeze at nine knots of boat speed. LOTS of heel. The lesson is that we should have stuck with the gut instinct.

We also learned that the leech cord for the 0 should be led forward to the tack, so we don't need to send John out to the clew just to adjust the leech cord... (However it did make for a great picture!)

Monday 11:20

There is no more peaceful place to sleep than on a boat that's all quiet, just sailing fast, the only sound the wind and the water rushing by.

Monday 21:59

Del's award-winning chili and a little nip of wine set us straight on this damp, gray evening—it was as if Gail had planned for the weather. We've been cruising along most of the day with the Code 0, peeled to the A2 just after dinner. The skies parted for just a moment to let us know the sun still shines somewhere.

The days are longer now, we got up at 21:00 for the shift change and it was still bright. But with these cloudy skies, it gets dark quick.

The current estimates put us in Hawaii in nine more days. The idea is daunting, although the past five have gone by fairly quick. It's amazing how fast the days can go by when life is eat, sleep, sail.

Monday 22:06

Flying squid just jumped the lifelines and landed at Del's feet with a thump. The little guy was about six inches long. I wasn't doing anything (except for writing) at the moment so it was up to me to get him back home. I said, "Is he gross?" Joseph said, "Of course he's gross! He's a squid! Get a paper towel..." I got two and picked the little guy up and sent him and the paper towel back into the drink.

Tuesday 00:13

Found a new mode with the A2... low and fast! With Joseph at the helm, we eased the kite about three feet—turns out we've been sailing strapped for hours. Ugh. But now, we've got the same boat speed if not a tick higher, sailing with a true wind direction of 150 – 160 instead of 120 – 140. Tack is twisted out, and our workhorse kite is pulling us toward Hawaii... more or less. It does help though that the waves are finally behind us, which keeps the kite from flogging around so much—part of the reason we were sailing strapped in the first place. Trim is more active now, but loads are still reasonable for one person sitting on the high side in front of the winch. Cushions set up like a lazy boy... feels like we could do it

all night, but the reality is, we have to do it for eight more days. Instead, we hand it off to John and Andy, and Joseph and I are off to try and sleep a bit with Comedy Central going on above decks.

Tuesday 19:45

I spotted a huge white sailboat coming up behind us about 17:45. Two hours later, it is making its way toward us. Del thinks it might take our transom, but it also seems to have come up five degrees. We are all very interested to see who it is.

Our speed has been consistent most of last night and into today, between 8 – 11 knots. Wind is up now, and we have the A4. Gail made spaghetti for dinner, which really hit the spot. It was lighter and a little bit easier sailing today; allowed people to get cleaned up, make some repairs. Greg made John a little man-purse for the fid and the handcuffs. John went flying out to the A4 to change to the heavy air sheets after we set it. Del worked on the preventer. We pulled the jackline out from under the stacked sails.

People are a bit tired and it's gotten the best of some of us, me included. For me, focusing on the sailing and keeping the boat moving fast when it's my turn/job to do so is what gets me through. Seems like every day we settle in to a slightly better routine, and are constantly learning stuff about the boat and the sails. Hard to imagine that we're not at halfway yet—in fact that's not likely until Thursday, with ETA to Diamondhead sometime early on the 29th.

Tuesday 20:22

OEX just slid past our transom. About the time we realized who it was, we had a call on the radio. I answered, the reply was, "Is this Jenn?" I said, "Hey Jeff!" As in Jeff Thorpe from Quantum. It's really quite amazing, out here so far from anyone, to have a boat come within a couple of lengths of you, and on the radio, to have a friend call in to say hi.

Tuesday 20:31 (Joseph)

A little late but I just wanted to make the comment that we made it through the entire night last night without a sail change (A2). Good times.

Wednesday 06:14

Night six coming to a close. We did our first peel with me (Jenn) on the bow—we had already woken John up once for a peel earlier and decided to let him sleep through this one. All went well, if not a little slow. Tiny chance I may have twisted the halyards up, but it doesn't seem like it; we'll check in the daylight. (Later note: Yes, they were twisted. Shoot.)

We keep moving along, back and forth between the A2 and A4—as soon as we put up the A2 the wind picks up, but when we put up the A4, it drops again. Finally we're able to drive down a little bit and keep the speed up fairly well.

We passed a cruise ship all lit up like Christmas. It came within 4.5 miles of us, but seemed much closer. We're pretty sure there's a boat off to starboard too, but the light we see has only been oh so faint. Looking forward to morning reports.

Wednesday 09:36 (Joseph)

Long night. Peeled to the A2 and moving along nicely with a following sea and 12 knots of breeze during my 0:300 – 09:00 watch. Around 05:30 the wind started picking up pretty strong in front of a squall, consistently 15 – 17 knots, with occasional puffs slightly above that. Boat was humming along nicely, sailing around 10 – 11 knots at 150 TWA, but there was a constant vibration in the helm and stern of the boat, which had started some time mid-day yesterday. After about an hour of sailing in breeze too strong for the kite, we started arousing crew for a sail change. Wind became very headed, moving from about 35 – 40 true direction to 0/360. John came up, Kirk eventually got up (like waking the dead). Halyards were crossed, so we opted for a bald-headed change to the A3. It probably took an hour from when we decided to change the kite until it actually happened. But at least during that time, we were able to make some serious time in front of the squall, keep the boat flat, and keep the kite in one piece.

A3 went up just after sunrise and we were off, power reaching at 135 TWA in 20 knots of breeze, right on course. We managed to sail in front of and around the front of the squall, so it was a pretty good look. But all good things must come to an end. Wind started to lighten up, and we got lifted about 25 – 30 degrees above course. We wanted to let people sleep, so stayed on the bad heading for a bit. Decided to change to the A4, since we needed to come down and wind was 12 – 14 knots.

While letting people sleep, we put up the spin staysail for a little more power. At the same time, we scoped the keel and rudder to see if we could figure out what was going on with the vibration in the helm (we had done this yesterday mid-day but found nothing). Alas, there was kelp on the rudder and rope on the keel. So we ended up dousing the staysail and A3 and backing down to clear the rudder and keel. Just before gybing back around to course, John nearly fell overboard up on the bow—he was hanging upside down by his knees off of the lifeline.

John got back onto the boat and we proceeded to hoist the A4 and the staysail. Now on course again. The bad news is that we got the morning report and learned that we lost about 20 miles yesterday to the rest of the fleet. I think a lot of that is because of junk on the keel and rudder for probably something like 12 – 18 hours. But Gail made a tasty

breakfast of hot oatmeal with sweet brown sugar and raisins. Nice way to end out my watch...

Wednesday 15:25

All quiet down below, Del and the helm and Joseph trimming. Getting a little extra wind, I probably have to head up shortly to help. Blue sky for the first time in a while—we actually had a sunrise and I got to see it! Although it was busy with one of the aforementioned sail changes.

Several squalls on the horizon, but we manage to stay to one side or the other of them. A little building cloud cover overhead helps keep the temps down.

Wednesday 17:15

Wind slightly up but so is the sea state and it's hard to keep our desired course as we're rocking and rolling. Boeuf bourguignon for dinner, Andy requesting red wine—personally I'm too tired for wine, but there is increasing talk of how good a cold beer would be.

Kirk has begun to put a piece of tape on the helm pedestal with the optimum heading and true wind angle, which really helps especially as watches change, but also because standing up there for even 30 minutes with the wind shifting up and down it's easy to forget where you're supposed to be going. Kirk has also begun posting a piece of paper with our position in the fleet and distance covered, which is fun to look at and good for crew moral—at least when we have a big mile day. Another lesson learned: The spinnaker staysail flies a lot better when led outboard through the guy block.

Kirk now says our expected arrival is Tuesday night at midnight. The current focus is on tomorrow's expected halfway party—hard to believe we're only half way.

Thursday 04:34

Wild ride tonight. Started just after dinner... but let me back up.

Gail's boeuf bourguignon was every bit as good as it smelled. We had a spot of wine, and the first sunny evening in several days to eat it. The whole crew was on deck—it was the almost halfway party. As if on cue, as soon as dinner was over, our first major squall came in bringing rain and big breeze. It was like a washing machine below, but on deck, John, Andy, and Greg were having a heck of a time—heard at least one yahoo from John.

When Joseph and I came back on at 21:00, they had tacked the staysail to windward and pulled the pole back, sailing deeper and faster riding the waves. Del was at the helm for an hour pushing the boat around through the post-squall slop before handing off to Joseph.

Joseph's driving is so steady, that in this breeze with the excited sea state, we found it was better to trim on the kite and lock it down and play the traveler to help him keep the boat flatter—not flat mind you, but flatter. The moon was out for the first time this trip, a waxing crescent that was so bright it shone moon glow across the water and lit up the sails better than our flashlight—truly stunning.

Joseph was having the time of his life—literally, he said, “I’ll remember this night for the rest of my life.” We pushed on, posting sustained speeds of 13 – 15 knots over several minutes riding down waves. Near the end of his shift, we got Del to come play the main traveler, which helped Joseph to catch a wave and surf down reaching 17.1—a new course record.

It was more of the same when the other watch came on. They put in the hatch covers after a near wipe out, but fortunately managed to hold on to it. It’s very tough driving requiring a lot of focus on everyone’s part, there’s no doubt about that, but they were certainly having as much fun as we were.

When Joseph and I got back on at 03:00, the wind was slightly down, but is now back to gusting into the 20s. The talk is no longer when should we change kites—the A4 is our heavy weather runner workhorse, although we do have the A5 too—but instead, about when we’ll gybe. Kirk says we gybe when the TWA is sustained for a long period of time at 60 degrees or more. We’re hoping that won’t be until daylight; no one is looking forward to doing our first gybe in the dark. Either way, it will be an all hands on deck maneuver, requiring the movement of all the sails, and likely taking up to an hour from decision made to completed.

In the meantime, we continue with tough, active trimming and very difficult driving, but an average boat speed of over 10 knots is worth it. Joseph is predicting a 290 nm day; I bet him a non-existent beer that it will be closer to 240 nm. In the mean time, just sitting in the cockpit is hard. If this keeps up, the next days will be extremely tiring.

Thursday 10:22 (Joseph)

Position report shows that we are now the farthest north in our fleet, and now farther behind than before. The rest of the boats seem to have dropped into a VMG running mode, while we were a few degrees higher going for flat out boat speed. This has changed our strategy a bit by shooting for at TWA of 155 instead of 145. Checking our polars again verifies that 155 is probably a better angle. In anything over about 12 – 14 knots of breeze, the target should be 150 TWA or deeper.

Another thought is how we dealt with the massive header yesterday morning when we were running out in front of the squall just before dawn. Since we were so far headed, we

peeled from the A2 to the A3 to reach back up to “course.” But we then got lifted, and were steering well above course for some time. At the time, we were concerned that dipping too far south would cause us to run away from the wind that we had worked so hard to get to. In retrospect, even if that had happened, it probably wouldn’t be so hard to reach back up into the breeze again. This is different from the “normal” Transpac warning about sailing too hot of an angle and getting spun up into the high, where you then have to bleed down in light air VMG running. Perhaps the better call yesterday would have been to peel from the A2 to the A4, ride out the header for as long as it lasted, and then continue on VMG running after that.

Regardless, last night was pretty epic, sailing out in front of the squalls at fairly high boat speeds, relying on the instruments and the moon glow...

Friday 17:37

The last couple of days have been tiring and many of us have struggled to sleep, hence, not so much time to write. We had our halfway party yesterday. Mahi mahi and rice, a little champagne and some sparkling cider. We opened a box from John Dukat—he sent an espresso maker and coffee, a *New Yorker*, some small toys, and other little goodies. We had great weather and it was fun to relax a bit.

Afterward we decided to do our first gybe. Earlier we had discussed a possible chicken gybe, but the sea state had calmed and it was only blowing 14 knots or so. We had our positions divvied out, and everyone was ready to go, but as Del turned the boat he caught a little bump and the kite went straight around the headstay—that was the second time yesterday, previously on a bad header we did the same thing. We dropped the kite and got the Elliott Patterson (sp Pattison?) A4 up, which we turn out to like better so at least it wasn’t a total loss.

The night was not so bad and passed by quick, but it was hard to keep the eyes open on deck. The sky was mostly clear and we were treated to the beginnings of an impending meteor shower.

One lesson learned: Kirk needs to give more information along with his headings and target wind angle. While he was asleep his directions were misinterpreted leading us off course for a short time and putting massive heel on the boat. Kirk had to come up and sort things out. Not much time was lost fortunately, and it’s one more thing in the book to know for next time. He is now giving us a lot more information, which is very helpful to drive and also make decisions when a big header or lift comes.

I am very glad and thankful that finally I managed to get four hours of sleep this morning, so I feel much better today. Not everyone was so lucky and still struggle to keep up today. I

was woken up as we were dousing the kite to back the boat down to get more crap off the keel and rudder. But since it was 10:30 and I'd slept so well I was so happy to sit there and squirrel and re-band the kites—we set the Ullman A4 while we got the EP A4 ready to go again.

Gail made pancakes and bacon (yes, on a boat—very bacon-y down below!) and tacos for lunch. Now comes chicken mole for dinner, so even if we can't sleep, at least we are getting plenty of delicious calories!

Our watches overlap, but there really are two separate watches with distinct styles—the Greg, John, Andy watch seems to be happy go-lucky most of the time with lots of animation and jokes. The Del, Joseph, Jenn watch is more subdued. Most of the time we're just staring at numbers and water, the majority of our limited conversation has to do with whether we need to come up or down, heel or flatten the boat.

For my part, if I'm not actively driving or trimming, I'm just staring at the water. It's amazing how long it's possible to just stare contentedly at the same thing. Except for some approaching squalls, it looks the same every day. The sunrise and sunset are getting earlier—we had a fantastic sunset last night, my first real good one of the trip. While there are things to think about—how our families are doing, how's my cat, how many emails I'll have when I turn my phone on again finally—it's easy to just let it all go out here and really think about absolutely nothing at all for hours and days at a time.

Saturday 06:13

It's steamy in here. Getting constantly headed at sunset, we opted to put up the A3 and reach hard—not what we were expecting this late in the trip. Chicken mole, though delicious, was extremely hard to eat for dinner. I've got it all over my shorts and I'm sure I'm not the only one.

It also means we had to unload the bow of all our gear stashing it in the port quarter berth, and close up all the windows because of the water over the bow. Note to self: When racing to Hawaii, leather-covered settees are a bad plan. Hashtags: muggy, sticky.

John hit a new speed record of 20.2 just before sunset. We were in for a wild night ride. Eventually headed so far down, that we were driving 140 – 145 at a heading of 220. We're hoping for a lift. The concern is overshooting Hawaii and having to jib top reach to the finish—not the way to come in to Diamondhead for sure. On the other hand, we've had consistent speeds well over 10 knots for the better part of the night. Hoping for a big mileage day.

When I came on at 03:00, the winds had died slightly but the header put us at an awkward angle to the waves. Del was on the helm looking for speed and putting the boat almost on

its ear causing Joseph to break the seat in the head. I was completely zonked out, but woke up with a groan as I was slammed in to the side of the berth—I wouldn't have woken up otherwise so maybe that was the plan! Joseph yells up to Del, "Can you please flatten out the boat so the off watch can get dressed?!?"

It wasn't easy though, and after we got up, even Zenmaster Fred (Joseph) had a hard time driving in it (also due to his significant lack of sleep). I got on the helm for maybe a half hour or so, but finally gave it up not because of fatigue, but because it felt like I had put myself in a washing machine and turned it on turbo—nauseating.

Everyone is tired, some are giddy, some are just dead. Have to try to keep our heads on straight and not make too many (more) mistakes between now and Ohau. Goal is a daylight finish on Tuesday.

Saturday 18:15

With the unexpectedly long trip, Gail is starting to get creative with our meals. She put the leftover mole mixed up with a bag of pasta she had—and it was one of my favorite meals! For dessert she served apple rhubarb pie. Suffice it to say, we are not going hungry yet. We won't run out of food, but propane is an issue. Hoping to make it through.

The water maker wasn't working today because we were too heeled over. Finally given the word to square back again and Joseph on the helm solved that problem.

We seem to be past the garbage patch for the most part now, although we do see some lost fishing gear and buoys here and there. We haven't seen any real wildlife in days, although I did have a dream about a shark with a six-foot fin. There are a lot of flying fish though—amazing to watch how they fly, they really look like little Cessnas.

We're still on Pacific Time but the world here is on Hawaii Time, which means the sunsets are later, and so are the sun rises. I won't likely see any sunrises because by the time I'm off at six, all I want to do is sleep. But the sunsets have been spectacular.

Hoping for a slightly less wild ride tonight than last night. The boat is flatter but Gail is still strapped into the galley. There is talk of a couple gybes, but it depends on what the wind does—the weather charts can't be trusted this year apparently.

Sunday 00:09

Wow. What a night. The moon now just over 50% is bright in the sky but still tons of stars—Jupiter and Venus showed up first. Sitting on the rail is a bit damp, requires a light jacket or fleece, but on the helm, it's t-shirt driving. So pleasant! We're sailing deep and hoping for the header to get us down further. Have 8 – 10 knots of VMG, up to 12 knots of boat speed. Finally how sailing to Hawaii should be.

Sunday 06:05

It's roly-poly up there; very difficult driving. Moon is gone now; stars and black clouds fill the sky.

Sunday 20:35 (Joseph)

It's hot. After a clear night last night, and most of the day today, it's now quite squally. For the past 24 hours or so we have been in soak mode, trying to run at 155 – 160 TWA. Massive header is anticipated, but we were lifted about 20 degrees above course for several hours this afternoon. It was so bad that we were talking about throwing in a gybe for a couple of hours just to get closer to the islands. But then we got hit by a squall that came with a big header that brought us back on course.

Winds are supposed to continue to shift to the southeast, which is very unusual for the summer. Earlier today, the Deckman router had us sailing through the slot (between Molokai and Lanai). I think instead we are going to plan to head straight for the DH buoy—if we're lucky, we won't even have to gybe. But some of the forecasts show wind out of the south at Waikiki, which would mean finishing with a headsail on port tack. Not exactly the most "normal" end to a Transpac, but then it might be rather fitting to this wacky year.

A little under 500 miles to go, which would have us finish in about 48 hours. Everyone seems to be looking forward to finishing, although the next couple of days should be a lot of fun.

Monday 04:01

Tough night. Started with waking up the off watch at 22:30 to gybe—the wind angle was not cooperating and bringing the header we have been so looking for. John re-ran the sheets for an outside gybe. The maneuver took a while to accomplish, but was a success. Everyone playing a role and doing it well.

After midnight the other off watch got woken up for a chicken gybe back.

Monday 05:27

As I was saying, we had to chicken gybe back to course, after which it started to pour. Things were just drying off at 03:00 when we had a watch change again, John and Andy came down damp and tired and Jenn and Joseph went up damp and tired. But things were calm and we were moving along. At two o'clock we spotted what appeared to be a masthead light, and could be *J World*. They seemed to be on port along with us but moving at what angle we couldn't tell.

Kirk was doing his darnedest to keep us moving forward fast, and left of a very ominous black cloud that extended all the way to the water. He was unsuccessful. The wind moved forward and to stay on course we had to go to a headsail. Joseph now at the helm, Kirk and I dug the jib top out from under the pile and roused the crew to douse the kite in the pouring rain. All crew and boat wet through and through. Those off watch now sleeping in skivvies.

Greg is at the helm keeping the boat moving forward more or less on course. It was dismal at first... the boat slating back and forth with barely five knots of wind, but now as I write, the true wind speed is back up to 11 and boat speed hovering around 7.5 knots—not too much slower than we were going with the kite. At least we're heading in the right direction and the jib top is less trouble for the rest of the night than the kite is. No more sail changes planned until dawn. Our current mission is to keep the boat moving and let the crew get some rest.

Monday 12:22

Greg and Joseph pulled a shift for heroes not wanting to wake anyone up. I dug out a hole in the port quarter berth among the bags, damp and sticky and slept a good solid five hours. Woke up feeling rested, but groggy. The Code 0 is up and we're on our ear—again. This race has not been as advertised.

Andy is now on the helm since he got some extra sleep. John is sleeping in the cockpit. Del, Gail, and Kirk on deck too, so I'm writing and staying out of the sun as long as I can. The Deckman says 322 miles to go, or about 40 hours. A sunset arrival on Tuesday is highly unlikely now.

The mood on the boat is solemn as we try not to get sunburned. Hard to keep the head in the game, fortunately, the Code 0 doesn't require a bunch of trimming and the sea state is flat so the main effort at the moment is the driving, but just sitting in the cockpit or moving around in the cabin when we're heeled over takes effort too.

Monday 14:31

It's hot. Shoes on suffocate feet, shoes off burn feet. 305 miles to go.

Monday 18:26 (Joseph)

Last night was toughest night of the race so far. After the two gybes, massive header, squalls, and change from the A4 to the jib top, Greg and I decided it would be best to allow the rest of the crew to sleep as much as possible. We were both very tired, and took turns sleeping in the cockpit and driving in the light breeze. I was literally nodding off while standing at the helm, snapping my head up to look at the bearing and TWA to make sure we were on course.

At dawn, we were greeted to a glorious rose-colored sky. Red sky in the morning, sailors take warning. It looks like a lot of moisture in the upper atmosphere. Anticipating another squally night.

Greg and I share the “night watch.” Each day, our six hours brings us into dawn. For me, it’s 03:00 to 09:00. For Greg, it’s 05:00 to 11:00. Since we’ve travelled so far west, 09:00 is more like 06:00. I’ve really enjoyed the night watch, and have been able to hone my night driving skills, focusing on the numbers, the boat’s angle of heel, the pressure on the helm, while sailing in the dark unable to see anything. The tough part about the night watch is that the six hours of down time is during the daytime. When it’s bright, hot, and people tend to be up and milling about. Until the past few days, I think that both Greg and I had a really hard time sleeping during the daytime. We’re so exhausted now that I think the sleep is coming a bit easier.

Monday 21:02

Looks like it will be a beautiful sunset for night 12. 239 miles to go.

Tuesday 00:01

Never thought we’d still be on the boat today. But since we are, at least we have a bright moon, stars, and a horizon. Swell building knocking us around with the A2 up. We lowered the pole to tighten up the luff, which helped a lot. We’re doing seven to nine knots in 10 – 12 knots of wind. Not too bad. I’d take that over 10 knots in 16 knots of breeze and raining. Although I should probably knock on wood for writing that... we don’t know what the night might still bring.

Tuesday 06:08

Kamikaze Fish is the name of our early-2000s neo-punk boat band. Hit singles will include “Waiting for a Header,” “Suck You, Squally,” “Stinky Socks,” and “Deckman” among others. Although the idea has not yet been floated to the group, I think “Squid At My Feet” could be a good addition to the album.

We’ve carried the A2 through the night, sometimes squared back, now pole forward running hot, determined not to get sucked down into another squall—we learned our lesson last night. So far, we’ve only had a brief spiting of rain. The moon is about three-quarters full, and when not behind a foreboding cloud, brightens up the night sky like John’s headlamp.

The boys say the driving has been pleasant, but it’s definitely tough. The swells are from a somewhat odd direction, the wind is shifting back and forth, and lulling as low as 13 knots, and puffing to 17—on the edge for this kite. We’re currently on our ear, but still carrying

around 10 knots of boat speed so we're sucking it up and making trees to the finish line.
177 miles to go.

Tuesday 09:58

Peeled to the A3. Went smooth until a little snafu with the new sheet when Kirk let it slip out of the self-tailer and it got wrapped with reaching pressure on the winch handle. Somehow managed to save before kite totally hour-glassed. Flying along now. 139 miles to go.

Tuesday 21:03

Spent the whole day on our ear with the A3. Miserable, hot, exhausting day with some of the most active trimming we've done this trip. Down below it was steamy—all ports shut because of waves. Around 19:00 we finally went to the jib top. Now we're still on our ear doing about the same speed, but pointing in the right direction. *CaZan* right in front of us, and apparently we're neck and neck with *Hula Girl* on corrected time. The real benefit of the jib top is that there is very little trimming involved allowing the crew to rest and relax a bit on the final run—or, reach that is.

Del took over the dinner service with bowls of Raman made with hot tap water. John's playlist keeping us entertained. Molokai and Oahu are now both in sight. 29 miles to go.

Wednesday 17:05 (Hawaii Time)

We made it. There were times when we thought we wouldn't though. It was a rough ride in to the finish. We set the A3, but didn't get enough power, so did one final peel to the A2. We brought it back on the pole and headed down as we rounded Koko Head.

The wind was up in the high teens and low 20s, and we had to throw in our forth and final gybe with only about five miles to go. Greg was at the helm; Gail on check stays. John on bow, Andy on main, Del on the tractor. Jenn, Joseph, and Kirk in the cockpit on the spin sheets and main. With an all clear from the bow, we commenced the gybe, but before Greg could say "smoke it!" we hit a wave and the gybe happened. The boom came crashing over, the spinnaker somehow made it clear around the forestay, and everybody was on the boat and uninjured—although it was craziest gybe I've ever done on a big boat for sure!

We then got the word that our heading was 280—we were reaching AGAIN! Greg heated it up and I held on to the kite with puffs up to 25 knots coming off the mountain. The wind dropped slightly which made it a little easier, and we had Red Buoy #2—the Diamondhead buoy—in sight. With 1.5 miles to go however, on a huge puff, the main sheet worked its way out of the self-tailer on the winch and through the open clutch. We now had the boom

perpendicular to the boat with the active spin sheet threatening to cut through the sail. A fitting way to end this race—ugh.

The crew went into action and we had the main and kite flying as we crossed the finish line. On the radio we heard, "Adrenalin, this is the Transpac race committee. Welcome to Hawaii, Aloha!" Those were such sweet words.

We dropped our sails and followed the guide boat into the harbor. First we saw the Hawaii Yacht Club with a patio full of spectators cheering for us. They announced the name of the boat and all the crewmembers names. We docked across the way where our own welcome committee was waiting for us. The inspector got us sorted out quick and we were adorned in a pile of leis each.

We were given huge Mai Tais and there was food, poke even! We wore hula skirts and there were pictures. We took off our sailing shoes finally—most of us.

The race was definitely tough: We sailed farther and it took longer than any of us had anticipated. We worked hard, ate well, learned a lot, and all laughed at least a little. There were times when we (I) might have wanted to cry. But we got through it. By the time we got to Hawaii, we had come together as a team. I'm pretty sure, that given the chance, we'd all do it again, with the same boat and the same crew—and that was really the goal that Del had set out for us.

Mahalo and Aloha!