



Solo ocean rower Lia Ditton

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Lia Ditton Overcomes Capsize and Challenges During US to Hawaii Solo Row Attempt

(July 16, 2020, mid-Pacific Ocean) A month after leaving San Francisco, solo ocean rower Lia Ditton is finally on a southwest trajectory on course for Hawaii after recovering from a terrifying capsizing and spending weeks battling currents and winds that took her south.

As well as facing challenging conditions that have tested her skills and resolve to the limit, Lia has also had to cope with the devastating news on

June 22 that fellow rower Angela Madsen had died during her attempt on the same route after 57 days.

Lia, also a professional sailor, had been fighting adverse currents, wind and steep waves the size of buildings, as she clawed her way off the Continental Shelf and away from the California coast. On day 19 (July 6), her ambitions almost came to an end. As she was rowing, a rogue wave capsized her 21-foot boat and plunged her head first into the dark ocean. With no time to be frightened in the moment, Lia quickly realised the boat was not easily turning itself back upright and climbed onto the boat using all her strength to roll the boat back herself, as she described in her [blog](#).

On July 7, Lia wrote: *“The boat was upside down. The boat was not self-righting. I recalled an instance in the Atlantic rowing race, where Chris Martin had rolled his boat back over like a dinghy. Without hesitation I began to roll the boat. The boat began to roll over and I remember looking at the hull and seeing only a few barnacles and being pleased by that. I don’t remember how I initiated the roll or how much force I used, but the muscles in my neck, arms and shoulders are very sore now. As the boat rolled I felt frightened because there was nothing to hang onto on the underside of the hull.*

“The boat came back upright fast, knocking me back under water. ‘Find the safety line,’ barked the voice in my head. I fumbled again and found the safety line. I grabbed the side deck to pull myself up but there was no strength left in my arms and in that moment I was sure that was why Angela died. ‘NO LIA!’ I tried again and knowing there was no third try, used sheer will and all the energy left in my body to get myself back onboard.”

Once safely back on board, a passing US Navy ship offered a rescue opportunity, but Lia declined and chose instead to continue. In the days following, while she mentally recovered, Lia had to completely restore all her cabin contents, secure the heavy items and re-pack to create better ballast. On top of this, she had to wash the salt water out of all her clothes using fresh water made via her Spectra water maker and use a couple of rare sunny days to dry everything. With support from her specialist team on shore to get her back on track, she is now finally catching favourable currents and heading south west towards Hawaii.

With her initial aim of challenging the all-time record of 52 days (set by Rob Eustace in 2014) looking very unlikely now, Lia is now attempting to break

Roz Savage's 2008 journey of 99 days to Hawaii. She has 50 days of food left and her land-based team is assisting with weather routing, medical support and safety, as well as keeping friends and supporters updated on her progress. This row, which Lia calls the half marathon, is viewed by Lia as training. Her main target is to row 5,500 miles from Japan to San Francisco in spring 2021, bidding to succeed where 19 other attempts have failed.

Education through exploration is a large part of Lia's motivation and as such her daily blogs and videos recounting the experience 'as it happens' have seen her social media following grow, with many new followers gripped to the story of the row. Lia and her team also prepared a series of education content for younger followers before she set off, covering all areas of her preparation, including what she eats, how she propels herself and how she navigates. Lia's boat décor also provides a lighthearted element to the programme through world renowned animator, Wes Archer (one of the original three animators on *The Simpsons*). Wes has designed a series of sea creatures, including Bobby Octobubble and Ellie Jelly fish, to keep Lia company for the duration of the row. All this content, including the sea creatures, will be hosted on her website and posted on her social media over the coming weeks as she approaches Hawaii.

Lia's tracker and blog are hosted on her website: www.rowliarow.com

To maintain her mission to become the first solo rower to cross the North Pacific, Lia relies on the generosity of her supporters through her crowdfunding campaign. Anyone who would like to add any amount to contribute to the cause can visit www.patreon.com/RowLiaRow. The RowLiaRow 'Family of Believers' are entitled to exclusive blog content and updates.

Lia is also backed by several companies, including London Speaker Bureau, Kenzen, Databarracks, ECHO and Ocean Racing. Gear sponsors are PainsWessex, Spinlock, SWITLIK, Spectra and The Canvas Works. Lia's Project Safety Sponsor is Ocean Signal, an ACR Electronics company.

Stay in touch with Lia

- Website www.rowliarow.com

- Real time tracker & blog <https://rowliarow.com/find-lia/>
- Facebook www.facebook.com/rowliarow
- Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/rowliarow/>
- Twitter <https://twitter.com/rowliarow>
- RowLiaRow crowdfunding campaign www.patreon.com/RowLiaRow
- Find out more about Lia here <https://vimeo.com/369312666>

Ends

Note for editors:

Images and film clips can be found here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/b7a618jdows8lcs/AACy3Ojlcgv-KjpssLnJBbiLa?dl=0>

Please use credits as tagged on each asset and do not remove the Row Lia Row logo at the end of the video clips.

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About Lia Ditton

A licensed captain, Lia Ditton, 40, has more than 150,000 nautical miles of experience and has competed in some of the world's most challenging ocean races. She was the only woman to complete the OSTAR 2005 single-handed transatlantic race; finished second in the Route du Rhum, France's most-prestigious, single-handed transatlantic race; captained the boat from the film Waterworld; is the 53rd woman to row the Atlantic and the 64th woman to row any ocean, and project managed PlanetSolar the largest solar-powered boat in the world.www.rowliarow.com/