

YOUNG GUNS STILL ROWING FOR IT
Oz to Africa racers approaching half way mark

You wouldn't want to be with them, and that's a fact. In a 24-foot boat facing gale-force winds and forty-foot waves with over 1,800 nautical miles still to row before they reach dry land, Jamie Facer-Childs and his school friend James Thyse are the youngest team facing the challenge of the first Indian Ocean Rowing Race.

Eleven boats started, now only seven remain in the race from Australia to Mauritius, with the daring duo in sixth place. You don't have to look at a map to know that it's a long, long way.

The pair, who are sponsored by LCG Bioscience, began the race on April 19th with 3,000 miles ahead of them. They are now approaching half-way in their boat "Southern Cross" but only averaging 10 nautical miles a day.

They are in good spirits despite nearly colliding with a tanker in the middle of the night and recently capsizing in some of the worst storms that the region has experienced for many years. Jamie, by satellite phone, explained how they were inside the cabin when a wave came at them sideways and tossed the boat over.

They somehow managed to turn it the right way up after spending seven terrifying minutes upside down under water. He says that the two of them are "missing our friends and family, and desperate for chocolate but we're in massively high spirits. We've been through a lot and still have a long way to go, but we're looking at things positively."

Jamie and James at 21 and 22 are aiming to set a new world record as the youngest ocean rowing pair in history, raising money as they go for Sparks, a children's medical research charity, and for Headway, the brain injury association. Their message to their sponsors: "If there is any way we can complete this crossing, we will!" If all goes to plan, they should reach Mauritius sometime in August.

Among the sponsors of the adventure is the specialist clinical research centre LCG Bioscience, which played a key role in the development of the early fertility drugs, which is appropriate as Jamie was one of the first generation of IVF babies.

Head of Volunteer Recruitment at LCG Bioscience, Clare Lyon is keenly following the progress of the boys. "I'm delighted to see them approaching the half-way point after the problems they have faced. I follow their progress via the website and wish them all the very best of luck on the second half of their journey. And no, I wouldn't want to be with them!"

Follow the progress of the Southern Cross at www.indianoceanrowingrace09.com

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