

## PRESS RELEASE

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*for immediate release*

During the recent Patos Island Race hosted by Sidney North Saanich Yacht Club (SNSYC) racers and fans were disappointed in the Race Tracker provided by the Swiftsure International Race organization when it failed during the race.

The Swiftsure organization deeply regrets this failure that persisted despite making every effort to solve the difficulties during the race. The problem, however, did not originate with the Swiftsure Race Tracker technology which displays the data feed from the SPOT units located on each competing boat. The failure was related to a Globalstar server that receives the data feed via satellite. They were unable to identify and correct the source of the technical failure before the end of the Patos Island Race leaving the race with no tracking/viewing system. Globalstar has assured us that it has since corrected the problem.

The race tracking system relies on the position information transmitted from the SPOT units via Globalstar's satellite network. If the supporting technologies underlying this complex system fail, then the entire Tracker System falls over. No amount of technical wizardry on the part of Swiftsure technologists will make the system work if the reliability of the feed from Globalstar is compromised.

The Swiftsure Race Committee would like to remind racers, and race planners, that although the Race Tracker is not a replacement for the Global Marine Distress and Safety System (GMDSS), it is still an important safety tool. During any outage (like the recent outage during the Patos Island Race) Globalstar staff manually monitor all 911/SOS messages, and should a SPOT user signal an emergency, their coordinates would have been relayed to GEOS and rescue services would have been employed. The Race Tracker is also a valuable system for tracking racing/retired competitors, and for watching the competition. Mariners and shore support organizations should consider the Race Tracker as both an information system and a secondary safety system for boats on the water.

Globalstar is working hard to ensure 100% reliability of the SPOT system, and they are mitigating risk of future similar incidents by postponing software maintenance activities, and by providing an open line of communication during any races.

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