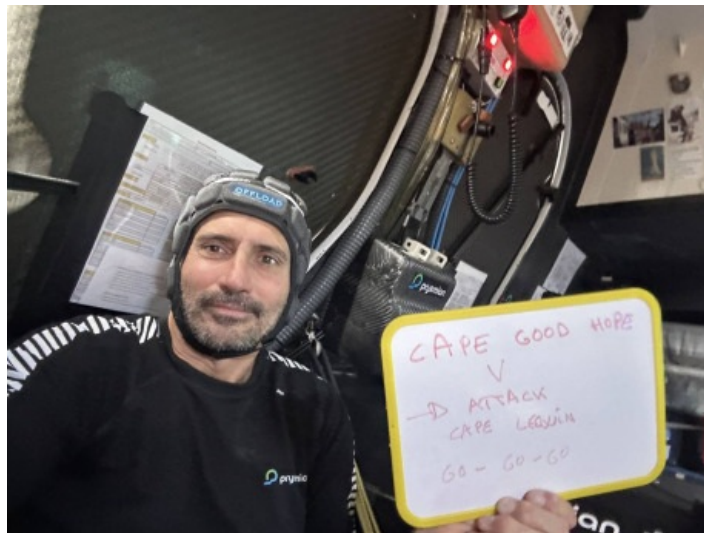


Communiqué - Giancarlo Pedote: “Like being in a giant washing machine”

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Having been at sea for the past month as part of the Vendée Globe line-up, Giancarlo Pedote is currently navigating his way through a sea in turmoil. Amidst a series of low-pressure systems, cross seas and omnipresent fatigue, every mile becomes a challenge. Far from an easy playing field, the Indian Ocean is giving the skipper a rough ride in this ruthless ‘washing machine’ cycle where each clear spell provides a glimmer of hope. Despite it all though, the skipper of Prysmian is still going strong, driven by the desire to make good headway... and finally link onto gentler seas.



“It really is a vicious circle. It’s as if I’ve climbed into a giant washing machine set on a permanent spin cycle. There has been a whole string of depressions, one after the other, without a moment’s respite. Over and over again, they’re playing with me, pummelling me hard, and enemy number one is definitely the sea rather than the wind. Cross, messy and merciless seas, they’re really packing a punch. It’s impossible to stand up without being tossed about” commented Giancarlo this afternoon, midway through some on-board survival gymnastics. “Even preparing something to eat becomes a trial!” assured the Italian sailor, who is currently positioned between the Cape of Good Hope and the Kerguelen Islands. *“The Indian Ocean... Well, it’s certainly no paradise for sailors. I think I can safely confirm without a moment’s hesitation: it’s not a place for boating. Four years ago, it was the same scenario. The zones of currents from the Cape of Good Hope to 70° East are a constant nightmare. Whirling winds, waves from every direction... It’s not easy to be honest,”* explains the skipper of Prysmian, who has curved his trajectory round to the north to latch onto more favourable sea and wind conditions.

No obvious way forward to the south

So, what’s next? However things play out, it won’t be easy. There will continue to be a sequence of systems barreling through and it’ll be important to slalom our way between them whilst taking care to preserve our boats. However, the process of weaving our way through this area is likely to be risky. *“I’m looking southwards, hoping there will be a window of opportunity to drop down as far as Tasmania. At this pace though, it’s never going to happen. A big depression is already due to make an appearance at the end of the week. For now, I’m not investing too much energy into it: I’ve already had my fill for today. We’re slamming more and more. You accelerate and then bury into a wave, then you power back up and then bury yourself again. The boat is making headway in slow motion and trying to set the*

pace just puts you at risk of breaking everything,” explained the Florentine, whose every step, every action is weighed down by the lack of rest. “I must admit that I’m a bit burnt out. When you reach this stage, you sleep everywhere, all the time. At the chart table, on a sack, in an unlikely area of the boat... Right now, I have a slight clear spell but to be honest I’d willingly trade that for smooth, ordered seas just so I can sail a straight-line course with the boat tracking nicely,” concluded Giancarlo. For the time being, the Indian Ocean doesn’t appear to be dishing out favours but he’s continuing to battle hard as he awaits better days... or even a slight pause in this hellish washing machine cycle.



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