

Kayak "OLO" damaged in the Atlantic!

By Piotr Chmielinski

- It's not good! The upper sleeve is twisted at the top of the rudder. For a proper repair there were needed: a blacksmith, a welder and an engineer. There was only an engineer, myself - Alexander Doba reports from the Atlantic. He has already been kayaking for a month on his Third Transatlantic Kayak Expedition from the United States to Europe.

From the description presented by Olek, a sea anchor rope had damaged the rudder during a recent strong storm that measured 8 degrees on the Beaufort scale.

Just a few days ago, it seemed as if "the engineer" was able to fix that very important navigating feature contributing also to the safety of the kayaker. During his previous expeditions, Olek's innate intelligence and technical skills quite often enabled him to find solutions to any problems that occurred on "OLO" and with the equipment onboard.

"At dawn, I dismantled the rudder. I used the cockpit for the anvil, and used the anchor as the hammer. I tried very hard. The axle bent 30 degrees, was still not straight enough. I cut off the twisted sleeve above the damaged area. At the top of the rudder blade I made four holes using a knife and a small drill. I attached the disc onto the top of the rudder blade securing it with twenty bands. Then, I set up the sleeve on the disc. All that time I had to be careful to prevent the rudder from falling into the water! By the evening I was ready for the assembling process. With one hand I was holding the blade bouncing in the water while the other hand tried to connect the system. The third hand ...? Well, I really could have had one! Next, came adjusting the cables and testing the replacement rudder. Unfortunately, a very strong wind blasted my repair work. Now, after dismantling the replacement of the control system again, I am just drifting" - Olek described his struggles in the texts sent to the expedition media coordinator, Piotr Chmielinski. Olek confirmed the seriousness of the kayak damage in the telephone conversation with his manager, Magdalena Czopik, who yesterday finally managed to connect with him.

Again, broken rudder and communication problems resemble the Second Transatlantic Kayak Expedition. Even more so, since Olek is about 400 nautical miles from Bermuda, the place where three years ago he was forced to stop to make emergency repairs. Does Bermuda have any secretive power to attract Olek?

We will keep you regularly updated on Olek's situation and the progress of solving the problem with the rudder.

So far 70-years- "young" kayaker has conquered more than 700 nautical miles from the American Coast. Lisbon is still nearly 2300 nautical miles away. Go, Olek, go!