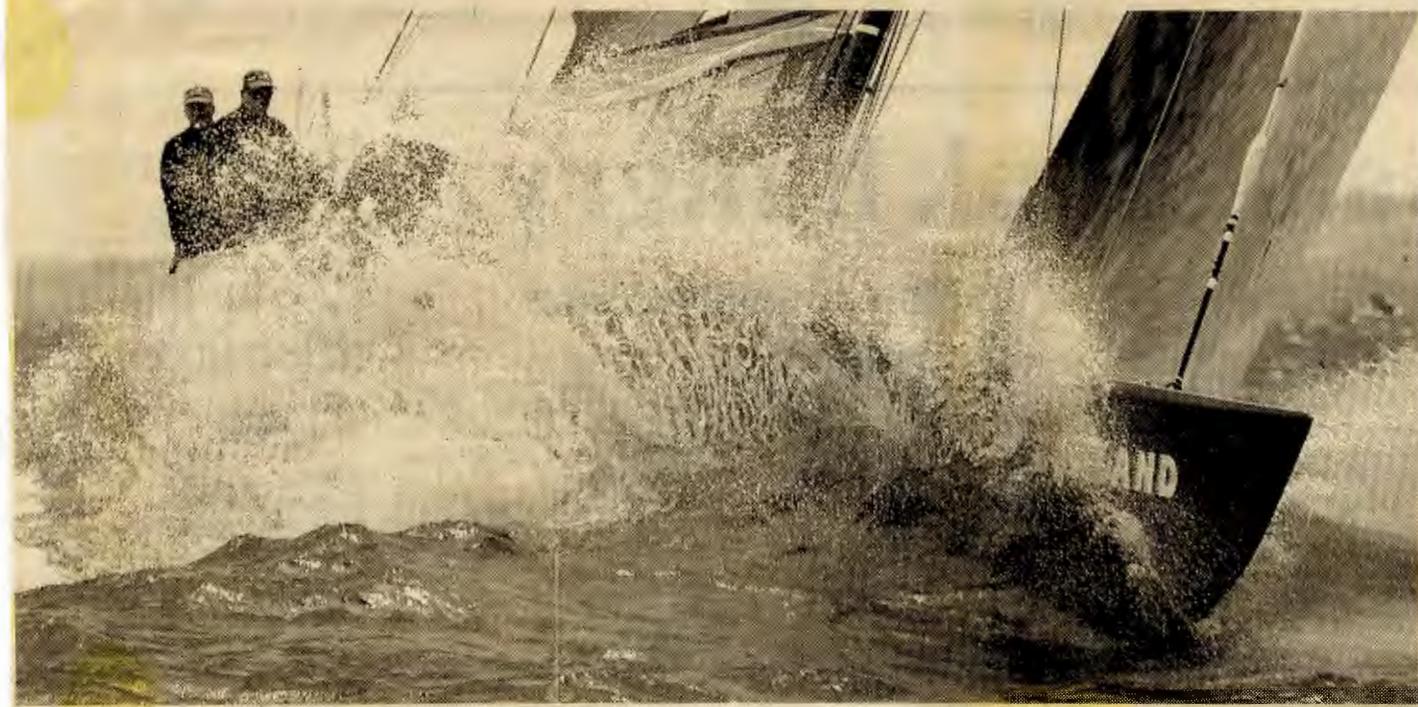


# Blood, tears on Luna Rossa

Injured bowman is rescued from Italian yacht as Team New Zealand win again



Team New Zealand yacht NZL60 steers through the waves in pre-race manoeuvres at the start of the second race against Prada in the America's Cup on the Hauraki Gulf in Auckland yesterday.

AUCKLAND — In a blood-splattered couple of seconds Italy's Prada Challenge lost their second America's Cup yacht race yesterday as Team New Zealand were already looking formidable with a 2-0 lead in the best of nine.

Within minutes of the start, which New Zealand's Black Magic easily won, the Italian Luna Rossa (red or blood moon) was in a crisis, its silver bullet hull stained with the blood of bowman Massimiliano Sirena.

It was a sickening moment, ending only when a tender, invoking medical emergency rules, raced in to lift Sirena off.

But even without that drama Luna Rossa's skipper Francesco de Angelis would have learned yesterday that Black Magic, under the helm of Russell Coutts, is a fearsome, perhaps unbeatable boat — in any conditions.

Luna Rossa proved resilient in the Louis Vuitton Cup challenger round but this was a blow to the popular visitors.

Racing was delayed about half an hour, with shifting winds, before settling from the south at about 14 knots with a calm sea.

Luna Rossa had the committee boat pre-start end but Coutts quickly showed his teeth, slipping Black Magic in under the Italians and sitting in a control-

ling position on their transom.

Brazilian Torben Grael, tactician on Luna Rossa, tried to throw Coutts off, at one point heading towards the spectator fleet. But it was no good and Black Magic had complete control powering down to the start line, even forcing Luna Rossa to do a slow tack.

Coutts had an 18-second lead over the start line. De Angelis engaged in a dogfight for the next 10 minutes and at times closed up, but was then forced to tack away — looking for better air and finding only disaster.

For minutes Grael complained something was wrong with the boat speed and it was soon established something was fouling the wings on the keel.

They brought out a rod to try and scrape it off, but instead the rod slashed Sirena's face and head, sending a gush of blood over the boat. He looked frightened at the heavy flow, which crewmen quickly tried to stem.

Meanwhile De Angelis bought Luna Rossa to a halt and Piero Romeo was sent into the Hauraki Gulf. He tried to dive to the keel bulb to clear it, but could not. The boat powered up, but Sirena's condition worsened.

Normally, outside contact is forbidden — but in a medical

emergency a crewman can be taken off, as Sirena was.

Coutts was far ahead by then and had rounded the first mark.

Everything seemed to fall apart for seconds and it looked likely Luna Rossa was even going to hit the mark — which would have resulted in a penalty. Eventually they rounded, 2 minutes 19 seconds behind.

Although on the downwind Luna Rossa picked up time, demonstrating its speed, there was no chance of coming back.

The Italians were in no fit race condition though, setting their headsail early and then

nearly messing up the sail drop, to go around the second mark 1:55 behind.

At halfway, on the third mark, the lead was 1:49 and for the first time in this event spinnakers instead of gennakers were flown.

Luna Rossa sails deeper, shorter angles but sails too slowly, while Black Magic races to extreme angles, always in control.

At mark four the defenders had a 1:59 lead while at the fifth mark, in the turn for home, Team New Zealand had a 2:26 lead.

Black Magic coasted in to an easy win, 2:43. The third race is tomorrow. — Sapa-AFP.



Team New Zealand sailors relax after a lack of wind caused a race postponement in the America's Cup.

Picture: AFP

Picture: AFP

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