

# Teamwork!



By Rich Wilson  
aboard *Great American II*

Date: May 7, 2003  
Position:  
04° 28'S / 021° 48'W  
Boat Speed: 10.2 knots  
Boat Course: 278°

Our game is 74 days 14 hours (1,790 hours) long. We have no substitutes when we get tired, no timeouts when our strategy goes awry, and no referees to keep things fair. Out here on the big ocean, it's just *GAIL* and her crew, King Neptune, and a million waves en route from Hong Kong to New York.

Our challenge is unusual. At 1,790 hours long, it is one hundred NFL seasons-worth of games. When things go wrong—shorted electrical switches, crashed computers, deceased bilge pump sensors—we must find a way to fix, accommodate, or jury rig solutions to keep going. When contrary winds or dangerous seas beat on us and

the boat for hour after hour and day after day, we must keep going. Very simply put, perseverance is a must in this event. If there is one solitary thing that we know when we start this game, it is that things will go wrong and that we must persevere when they do. The usual land support groups are not here.

Rich du Moulin and I are the only two people in the game out here, and teamwork reinforces individual perseverance. If the person on watch has a difficult sail change to make in the middle of the night, he calls up the other crewmember, even if he is asleep. The other person responds immediately and without grudge. If a particu-

lar job needs a particular skill, that person gets the nod, and the other picks up an extra chore somewhere else to even out the workload.

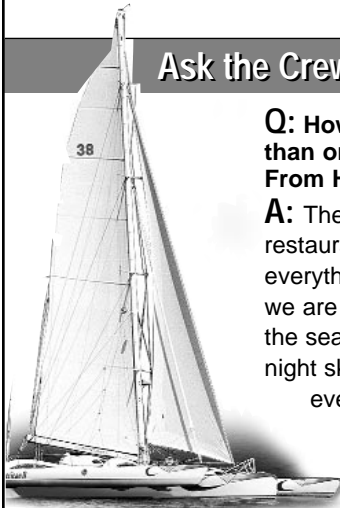
Here on the big ocean, together we may succeed in our quest. Working separately, we most definitely will not.



ANSWERS AT  
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1. Why is teamwork important on this voyage?
2. What is perseverance?
3. Describe some challenging situations in which you have had to persevere.

## Ask the Crew of *Great American II*



**Q:** How is life different on the boat than on land?

**From Hannah, New York, USA**

**A:** The boat is our home, place of work, restaurant, and place of shelter, making everything seem compressed. However, we are surrounded by expansive things: the sea that covers 75% of the planet; a night sky full of more stars than we could ever see on land; and a day sky with great cloud activity and wildlife.

—answered by Rich du Moulin



Have students look in the sports section for examples of decision-making that led to a loss.

Ask them to role-play the dialogue that took place before each decision. Discuss how different decisions or better teamwork might have helped the team win.

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