



PRESS RELEASE

**THE NORMANDY CHANNEL RACE BEGINS WITH A LIGHT WIND:  
ALBERTO BONA AND ALBERTO RIVA, ON THE CLASS40 IBSA, IN SIXTH POSITION  
THREE HOURS FROM THE START**

Caen (Normandy, France), September 16, 2024 – A very scarce West wind was the protagonist of the start of the **CIC Normandy Channel Race, the last regatta of the season for the Class40 IBSA**. A regatta much loved by oceanic sailors, with start and arrival in Caen.

On September 15 at 1:00 pm the 25 Class40s found themselves on the starting line with **unusual conditions for the English Channel**, ready to stoically and diligently face the long disengagement characterised by a first upwind tack.

**At 1:10 pm Alberto Bona and Alberto Riva crossed a starting line together for the first time, ready to tackle a thousand very tactical miles along a route between France, England and Ireland on board the Class40 IBSA.** There will be many challenges to face between currents and tides near the coast, average wind conditions and the need to find maximum speed. But they will also sail between three conspicuous and legendary points: the English channel of the Solent and the Irish lighthouses of Tuskar rock and Fastnet, thus combining **in a single regatta a lot of history of sailing and navigation.**

The first hour after the start was characterised by the very slow disengagement, which the two Italian skippers faced for the **first few miles with little headsail, to then make the first change and recover some positions.** The Class40 IBSA **finished the first phase in tenth position**, finally setting off along the French coast, with slightly strengthening winds and good speed. **After three hours, she was in sixth place**, less than two miles from the first, *Sogestran Seafrigo*, in the lead since the first disengagement mark.

During the afternoon the skippers – knife between their teeth and absolutely bellicose – left the French coast heading towards the Isle of White, crossing the Channel during the night. Around 04:00 in the morning of September 16 they reached the English coast to face the Solent and its dangers, just before dawn. Differently from tradition, the Solent presents itself in a “soft” version, with light wind, which is a different threat compared to waves and storms, because it’s its majesty the current that commands.

*“It will be a difficult regatta, with weather to be interpreted”,* stated **Alberto Bona** before the start. *“We will have to work hard to find maximum speed. During the transfer we trained mainly on reaching speeds in strong winds, but here we will probably sail abeam and, in the last phase, upwind”.*

*“The last event of the season”,* commented **Giorgio Pisani, vice president of IBSA Group and leader of the project Sailing into the Future. Together,** *“promises to be very interesting from a competitive point of view, both for the number of Class40s present at the start and for the difficulty of the route, which requires intelligence and cunning, qualities that both skippers possess. Kudos to Alberto for his choice to team up with Alberto Riva, building a team that will surely give us great emotions, as well as lessons in healthy competition.”*

According to the route defined before the start, after passing the Solent on Monday morning, on Tuesday at 08:00 the skippers should have finished sailing along the English coast and find themselves at Land’s End, to then head towards Tuskar Rock, where the first Class40 should arrive



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on Tuesday evening. Night sailing along the Irish coast will lead to the Fastnet, which the fleet is expected to reach mid-day on Wednesday. From there a long tack – according to forecasts – should characterise the return towards the Canal. After five or six days of sailing, a final upwind stretch in the English Channel will bring the Class40s to the finish line, also having to deal with many restricted areas, which will limit strategies at some route points.

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**THE PROJECT:** The three-year project *Sailing into the Future. Together* was launched in January 2022. The partnership between IBSA and skipper Alberto Bona was born on common bases and values, and aims to use sailing as a corporate communication vehicle towards the market and the nautical world. Ingenuity, courage, innovation, responsibility are elements that unites IBSA and Alberto, and the oceanic challenge, in addition to the sporting competition, also metaphorically represents the company's history, philosophy and vision, which are always oriented towards and are part of a path that brings IBSA increasingly closer to the topic of environmental and social sustainability, with a particular focus on inclusive sailing projects for people with disabilities. In November 2022, the *Route du Rhum* was the first sporting stage of the project *Sailing into the Future. Together*. In 2023, Bona and the Class40 *IBSA* participated in six regattas, including the *Rolex Fastnet Race* and the *Transat Jacques Vabre*. With two victories and three podiums, the record for the highest number of miles covered in 24 hours and over 15,000 miles sailed, Bona won first place overall in the Class40 International Championship. In 2024, between April and July, he will face two of the toughest transatlantic races on the international scene: the *Transat CIC* from Lorient (France) to New York and the *Quebec Saint-Malo* (from Canada to France).

**THE SKIPPER:** Alberto Bona is from Turin, and has a degree in philosophy. As a university student, he won the *Panerai* trophy aboard *Stormvogel*, fast ULDB and historic boat with which he crossed the Atlantic Ocean for the first time, winning the *ARC* with a New Zealand crew. In 2012 he took part in the *Minitransat*, finishing 5<sup>th</sup>, one of the best Italian results ever in this category. In 2015, he switched to the prototype category Mini 6.50 with *Promostudi La Spezia*: he won the Italian championship and finished second in the ocean crossing *Les Sables-Azores*. In 2017 he discovered the Class40: on Giovanni Soldini's former *Telecom Italia*, he participated in the *Transat Jacques Vabre*, where he was forced to withdraw when he was in sixth place. In 2019 he was aboard the Maserati Multi 70 trimaran, one of the world's fastest boats, where he practiced on the foils before moving on to the Figaro Beneteau 3, aboard which he participated in the *Solitaire*; the only Italian registered, in 2020 he finished 7<sup>th</sup> among the rookies in the first year and 16<sup>th</sup> overall. In 2021 he won the Italian offshore team title and the Europeans in mixed doubles aboard the Figaro 3. In 2022 he started the new project in partnership with IBSA: after an eighth place in the *Route du Rhum 2022*, in 2023 Alberto won the Class40 International Championship, closing a season with three podiums and over 15,000 miles covered.

**THE BOAT:** Designed by French naval architect Sam Manuard and built by the JPS Production shipyard, Alberto Bona's boat is a Class40 Mach 5 model. Its main characteristics are: scow bow – rounded and with a wider and flatter shape than standard bows – designed to stay high above the water and avoid being submerged; *all-round* hull, particularly performing in conditions of strong tailwinds; and a large, shielded cockpit, to face extreme conditions of navigation in as comfortable and safe as possible positions.

**IBSA:** IBSA (Institut Biochimique SA) is a Swiss multinational pharmaceutical Company, founded in 1945 in Lugano. Today, its products are present in over 90 countries on 5 continents, through the Company's 20 subsidiaries located in Europe, China, and the United States. The company has a consolidated turnover of 986 million CHF, and employs over 2,300 people between headquarters, subsidiaries and production sites. IBSA holds 90 families of approved patents, plus others under development, as well as a vast portfolio of products, covering 10 therapeutic areas: reproductive medicine, endocrinology, pain and inflammation, osteoarticular, aesthetic medicine, dermatology, uro-gynaecology, cardiometabolic, respiratory, consumer health. It is also one of the largest operators worldwide in the area of reproductive medicine, and one of the world's leaders in hyaluronic acid-based products. IBSA has based its philosophy on four pillars: Person, Innovation, Quality and Responsibility.

**For more information, visit [www.ibsasailing.com/en/](http://www.ibsasailing.com/en/)**

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