

home sweet home

Sunday, 02 August 2009

Well, the journey is finally over. I have now definitely taken the final transition from the seas to land and returned to work at Old Mutual. The feeling of being back on land is obviously bittersweet. It is great to see so many people who have encouraged me all the way and friends and family whom I heavily drew on for support through the past two years. I have though obviously found it difficult to really divulge the disappointment I feel about the outcome of the journey. I have often reflected on whether I could have carried on in any way. Despite having found some more rope in the boat clearout, in which I could have used to fix the rudder lines, I strongly believe that I could not have continued and that the difficult decision I took was the correct one to take. Given that the watermaker was no longer producing pure water (if any at all), the drinks containers were constantly filled with mould that was deteriorating my health and despite my best efforts often caused me to vomit, weakening my body and worse still, wasting vital calories for the physical endeavours. Furthermore, given the unreliability of some of my equipment, particularly the watermaker, I was constantly having to rely on my satellite phone for assistance and logistical support. Sadly in the last couple of weeks, the charger was refusing to take charge and I could only intermittently make calls. This to me was too big a risk to continue, given that it was very feasible that I could run out of water and not be able to tell anyone of my fate. Sadly, I had to make the awful decision to retire.

The challenge of rowing an ocean is an unbelievably difficult thing to do. The undertaking of a huge financial, logistical, physical and mental challenge is ridiculously tough and for every boat to have got to the start line I still believe is a huge achievement.

As stated though, I am so disappointed with the outcome yet despite the financial burden that I now find myself, I do not regret for one moment having decided to undertake it. The experience of rowing out of Geraldton harbour still raises the hairs on the back of my neck and the thrill of 18 months of incessant planning, we were all finally on the final leg in chasing our dreams. The trip has given me a new found respect for the ocean. Some of the seas were monstrous and for want of a better word relentless. Days upon days, the seas would be so rough that being thrown off your seat became a constant past time. However, there were also times that the sea was so still you were able to see your reflection and with a few gorgeous sunsets it certainly felt that I was the luckiest person in the world. Moments I will never forget.

I thoroughly enjoyed the rowing aspects of the race yet was amazed at how often survival was the foremost thought. The feeling of rowing and making 40 miles a day when nothing was broken was an amazing feeling, and I really felt as I would make the line.

If anyone were to undertake a challenge such as this in the future they will find that they cannot do it by themselves. It takes so many people to get to the startline. It takes the generosity of so many to help guide you and offer financial support. On that, I am conscious I owe a huge debt of gratitude to a huge number of people. To all the people at Old Mutual, I am truly grateful for not only letting me but encouraging me to chase my dreams. Also, to all the other sponsors, thank you, your generosity was truly humbling. There are many, many others to thank and I hope that I get round to passing my thanks to you all soon. Finally, I wish to thank my parents in particular for their un-wavering support for the trip, before during and after and the unbelievable logistical support in physically getting me to Western Australia, let alone the writing of the blog. I could not have asked for more.

So, new goals, new dreams and I can only wish for the support that I received for this adventure and can only thank you all for following the journey. I will try to upload some photos over the next week.

Simon