

La Solitaire Bompard Le Figaro 2016, France

NeptuLink by MVG, official partner of the race

“

For maritime navigators, using NeptuLink by MVG is like skipping from a 56K modem to ADSL. It's difficult to do without it once you've tried it!”

Gilles Chiorri
La Solitaire race director



4G connectivity at sea to ensure the security and live broadcasting of the nautical race

Challenge

When not using a satellite connection, both professional and leisure maritime navigators use radio, though its low bandwidth provides limited Internet access on board. Satellite connection is certainly more efficient but remains very costly and the transmission gap - when broadcasting images and sound - is large. In short, these two technologies do not offer a satisfactory high speed Internet access.

Having access to a high-speed connection at sea is of utmost importance for the famous La Solitaire Bompard Le Figaro 2016 race organizers as their challenge is manifold: ensure the security of 39 boats and their skippers at sea, monitor the race equity and broadcast the nautical race live without any interruption.

“It is a solo race so competitors can get exhausted very quickly. Monitoring them closely is essential”, explained race director Gilles Chiorri from OC Sport Pen Duick, also in charge of security in his accompanying boat.

“Live broadcasting of a nautical race is a real challenge”, said Erwan Riquier, General Director of Sea Events, the video production company of the event. “Until now, heavy and expensive resources, such as planes or helicopters, have been necessary to obtain high quality video and sound.”

/ Solution

For its 47th edition in July 2016, La Solitaire Bompard Le Figaro asked the Microwave Vision Group (MVG) to become one of its official partners. NeptuLink *by* MVG allows boats to access high speed Internet up to 20 nautical miles offshore. With reinforced mechanics, NeptuLink *by* MVG has been designed specifically to withstand the harsh marine environment and often unstable ocean conditions. It maintains optimal communication regardless of humidity, sea salt and spray, rolling and pitching motion or vessel type.

Through its two antenna transmitter-receivers, NeptuLink *by* MVG serves as a terminal that connects directly to distant 4G networks, or 3G or Edge where 4G is not available. NeptuLink *by* MVG houses a SIM card, thus allows high-speed connectivity to 4G networks at the same cost of mobile phone data access.

For La Solitaire, NeptuLink *by* MVG was installed on the three accompanying boats of the race:

- Gilles Chiorri’s catamaran, to collect all the necessary information for the race and its security;
- The media boat, to send images, sound and video highlights produced at sea;
- The AG2R LA MONDIALE health boat, to ensure its guardian angel role.



BENEFITS

Here are the main benefits of the solution, according to the race organizers:

- A high-speed internet connectivity (up to 100 Mbit/s) **at sea**, up to 20 nautical miles offshore
- **Smooth broadcast:** no network cut during the race
- **Security** ensured by the race direction thanks to **real-time** information
- A **very-competitive price:** less than 2 000 €, vs. more than 15 000 € for a satellite equipment using costly communications
- **Live broadcast** of the final leg of the race – La Rochelle/La Rochelle via Yeu island – capturing and broadcasting live the most striking images of this ultimate 24h run – **a first for an offshore race.**



“ NeptuLink by MVG will become a must-have for anyone who wants a good-quality network near the coast, or a complementary device when sailing further away.” Erwan Riquier, General Director of Sea Events, the video production company of the event



“For this operation, we combined NeptuLink by MVG with the Bouygues Telecom mobile network”, said Romain Butet, technical sales engineer at MVG. “Various tests undertaken prior to the race demonstrated this partnership was the most efficient in those specific coastal areas.”

“With NeptuLink by MVG, it has become possible to monitor constantly and share the status of the race in real-time”, declared Erwan Riquier.

“Journalists covering the event were impressed by the quality of the broadcast device”.

“It was a first for an offshore race and this successful experience has opened up perspectives for the future.” “Taking advantage of high speed Internet access at sea today is really magic!”, said Gilles Chiorri.



Next step(s)

Highly satisfied by the NeptuLink *by MVG* performance, the organizers would like to duplicate and amplify the live experience next year on the occasion of the 2017 annual race.

About La Solitaire du Figaro

Created in 1970 and organized since 2012 by OC Sport Pen Duick, La Solitaire is a monotype, timed, unassisted, step-by-step race, between the Atlantic Ocean and the Channel sea. Open to amateurs as well as professional sailors, it has become over the years one of the most prestigious and demanding offshore solo races. Many skippers have made their marks in this event, which annually brings together forty or so competitors, including Laurent Bourgnon, Philippe Poupon, Jean Le Cam or Franck Cammas.



To learn more about NeptuLink *by MVG*, contact us:



www.neptulink.com | contact@neptulink.com