

## Press Release

Dec 22, 2008 | ID: 18532

# Hard-fought Victory for Telefónica Blue

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Fighting for every inch, Telefónica Blue, skippered by Dutchman Bouwe Bekking, crossed the finish line at the end of leg three of the Volvo Ocean Race to score an emphatic victory in Singapore today at 1451 GMT (2251 local time).

It was among the closest finishes in the race history, with the top four boats finishing within 20 minutes following nearly 10 days of racing.

The Spanish team takes a valuable eight points towards their overall score, which now stands at 30.5 points, putting them into second place overall (subject to protest).

The 1950 nautical mile leg, which started from Cochin, India, on December 13, has been a leg of mental and physical torture for the crew, which took nine days, four hours, 51 minutes and 22 seconds to complete (09:04:41:22)

PUMA, led by Kenny Read/USA claimed second, 17 minutes behind the Spanish team, (finish time 1508 GMT) adding seven points to her tally, giving her a total of 27.5 points and third place overall. (Elapsed time: 09:05:08:01)

The final podium spot went to Ericsson 3 (Anders Lewander/SWE), who beat their teammates on Ericsson 4 (Torben Grael/BRA) to take third, and a total of 23.5 points overall. (Finish time 1509 GMT, elapsed time 09:05:09:48s)

Ericsson 4 was relegated to fourth place, adding five points to the four they earned for passing through the scoring gate a Palau We in first place. They still lead the race overall, but the margin has narrowed to just 4.5 points over Telefónica Blue. (Finish time 15:10:28 GMT elapsed time 09:05:10m28s).

After crossing the finish, Bouwe Bekking and his crew were ecstatic. Speaking from Telefónica Blue as they motored to Race Village at Sentosa Island and the waiting crowds and families, Bekking said:

"It is a very sweet victory. Very special - just before Christmas - a nice little gift for us and very nice because all the families are here. It will be good to see all the happy faces when we get in.

"It was incredible for us. We were in the lead, then we lost it and then took it back again. In the final six or seven miles, the breeze died completely and the other guys got very close, then we got a little puff of breeze and I managed to bring her home.

"I have never seen the guys so happy. I have known them for quite a while and normally they are very cool, but they were just ecstatic when they went through the finish. It is a huge thing for us.

"I told the guys to take it easy as especially in this part of the race, the seas can change in half an hour, and then we sailed a really good race from that point on. We had a couple of really good shifts and, tactically, it went our way and the guys sailed very fast in light airs, which is why we won. It shows that Ericsson 4 is not invincible and it is really good overall for the race itself."

Ken Read on finishing second said:

"I have never done anything like this before. Not really sure I want to do it again. Unbelievable. Hats off to the Telefónica guys, they did a nice job, congratulations. Nobody can remember the last time they either slept or ate. It has really been all hands on."

Anders Lewander, skipper of Ericsson 3, the Nordic team, said:

"It's been so enormously tough - all of this leg...but it's been really amazing. I've really enjoyed it because of the close tactics and the mix of conditions. It's hard work but the close encounters and the whole situation on this leg has been really challenging.

"I must admit that on several occasions during this leg, I truly believed we were able to win. I'm really proud and happy about our achievement...this short gybing and close encounters is really good racing.

"The Malacca Strait was challenging with night sailing up the shoreline...then the line-up with the four of us in very variable, light wind conditions. It was a bit of a lottery situation. But it was important to keep in mind the big picture and not necessarily look just at the short term."

The next boat to finish will be Telefónica Black (Fernando Echávarri/ESP) at approximately 1800 GMT.

#### **Leg Three Finishing Order Singapore**

1. Telefónica Blue: 8 points (FINISHED)
2. PUMA : 7 points (FINISHED)
3. Ericsson 3: 6 points (FINISHED)
4. Ericsson 4: 5points (FINISHED)

#### **Overall Leaderboard (Subject to Protest)**

1. Ericsson 4: 35 points (FINISHED)
2. Telefónica Blue: 30.5 points (FINISHED)
3. PUMA : 27.5 points (FINISHED)
4. Ericsson 3: 23.5 points (FINISHED)
5. Green Dragon: 17.5 points (RACING)
6. Telefónica Black: 13.5 points (RACING)
7. Team Russia: 8.5 points (RACING)
8. Delta Lloyd: 8 points (RACING)

#### **Scoring Gate Order**

1. Ericsson 4 (4 points)
2. Telefónica Blue (3.4 points)
3. Ericsson 3 (3 points)
4. PUMA (2.5 points)
5. Telefónica Black (2 points)
6. Green Dragon (1.5 points)
7. Kosatka Team Russia (1 point)
8. Delta Lloyd (0.5 points)

Positions are available every hour, on the hour, at <http://www.volvoceanrace.org/> . Click on RESULTS at the top of the page to go straight to the points table and onboard data.

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**Keywords:**

Press Releases,Special Interests,Sponsorship

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