



# Navigators in sailing competition choose EGNOS

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Certainly, navigators are the ones within sailing competition who benefit the most from technological advances. Tablets, applications, tools and satellites have arrived to change their professional lives. In the past, the main role of the navigator was “to calculate the position of the boat, which consumed all the regatta time”, as Nacho Postigo explains, navigator at Provezza, one of the monohulls competing in the 52 Super Series.

This monohulls’ race brings together the best sailors in the world. Boat crews are made up of Olympic champions, America’s Cup winners and also sailors that have been enshrined in offshore sailing as the Volvo Ocean Race.

Juan Vila, one of the most experienced sailors in the world, explains that “with the advent of GPS we got a helpful tool to navigate but its errors, which in some cases could reach until 16 meters, were of no use when we were fighting for each centimetre on the start line. We remained relying on human eye and the indications of the Bow, who told us how long it would take to reach the line”.

Fortunately now, with the inclusion of EGNOS in the navigation system of the sailing boats, Vila has managed to substantially reduce the interval of error provided by GPS: “EGNOS has been a great breakthrough for us. Nowadays we can rely much more on computers to find out if we are well positioned in the start line. We can be much more accurate to reach the line between the Committee and the buoy. We are more confident on what the computer is telling us”.

The decisive step forward has been the arrival of EGNOS to the sailors’ tablets; a rather simple functionality in terms of implementation within the complex navigation systems used by professional sailors. In Vila’s words: “SBAS is a feature that is usually configured in new navigation systems; therefore it is quite simple to take advantage of all the potential that EGNOS is offering”.

One of the turning points of the 52 Super Series is the start line. It is probably the trickiest time, when the Navigator must rely on the accuracy of its on-board computer. The start is an equation driven by speed, position and choice of the perfect place on the line. In the past, the battle in the start line was a process of learning and expertise in which the Helmsman, the Bow and the Navigator had to mentally calculate the right moment to pass the start line without skipping the kickoff time.

Thanks to EGNOS, positioning is more accurate than the one obtained relying only in GPS. Navigation equipment provides the boat with data on its position and velocity, letting the navigators calculate when to cross the imaginary line that sets the race’s start. This information, provided by EGNOS meets the accuracy needed for this demanding case. “Is extremely important to accurately measure our position with an error not greater than one meter and that is what EGNOS offers”, says Nacho Postigo. His counterpart in the Italian team, the Azzurra, Bruno Zirilli, claims that “Europeans should be pleased of having our own European augmentation system”.

Watch the [video](#) to learn more about the use of EGNOS in sailing competition.