



EXTREME ATHLETES

TRUE STORIES OF AMAZING SPORTING ADVENTURERS

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Hansen wheels along the Great Wall of China during his “Man In Motion” around-the-world adventure.

A Marathon Journey

Most wheelchairs are not built for long-distance travel, but Hansen was young, strong, fit, and very determined. He longed for adventure. His family, his coach, and his friends all encouraged him in his plans. He was also inspired by his friend Terry Fox, a young athlete who died in 1981. Although seriously ill, Fox had spent the last months of his life running across Canada to raise money for medical research.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Hansen’s wheelchair was specially built for his long expedition. This superlight chair weighed only 16 pounds (7.3 kilograms)—less than half the weight of an average wheelchair.

Keep Rolling

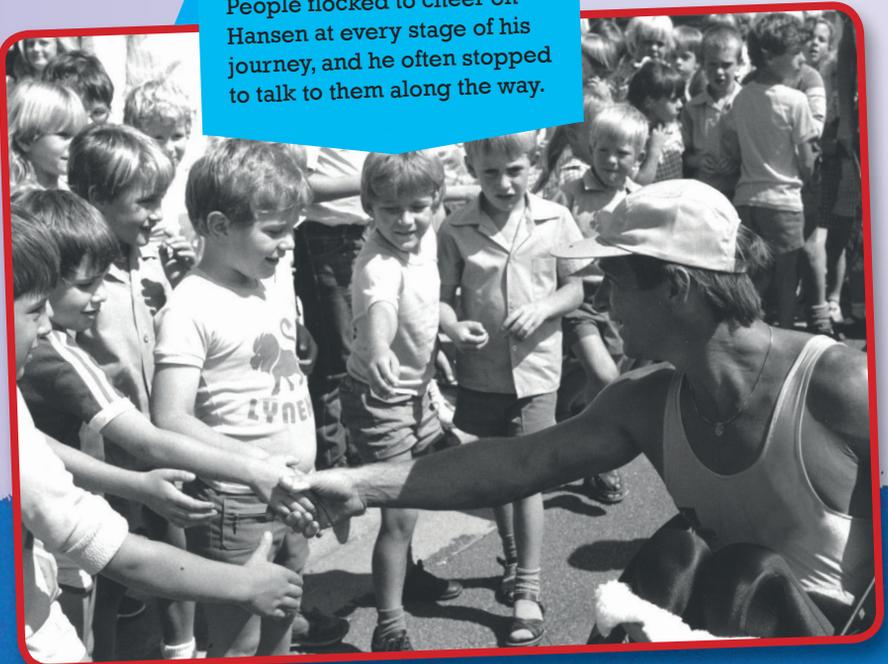
On a typical day, Hansen rode for around eight hours, traveled over 50 miles (80 kilometers), and made 30,000 pushes of the wheels with his hands. He wheeled at speeds of around 8.7 miles (14 kilometers) an hour in the countryside. In the cities he traveled more slowly because of the crowds and the traffic.

“Man In Motion”

Hansen’s adventure, called the “Man In Motion World Tour,” began in 1985 and took 792 days to complete. Hansen was on the move in his wheelchair for 465 of those days, and busy traveling across oceans in boats and planes for many more. Facing wind, rain, and sleet, Hansen wheeled his chair over snow and ice, and up and down mountain roads. He was chased by wild dogs, developed nasty sores, and caught dangerous infections. He had terrible pain in his hands, arms, and shoulders. He was robbed four times!

However, there were also many high points on the journey. A rock musician wrote a song in Hansen’s honor. Hansen received more than 200,000 letters of support. Admirers along the route showered him with roses. And he fell in love with expedition physiotherapist Amanda Reid, whom he later married.

People flocked to cheer on Hansen at every stage of his journey, and he often stopped to talk to them along the way.





Thousands of people gathered in a stadium in Vancouver on May 22, 1987 to welcome Hansen home.

"If you believe in a dream and have the courage to try, anything is possible."
Rick Hansen

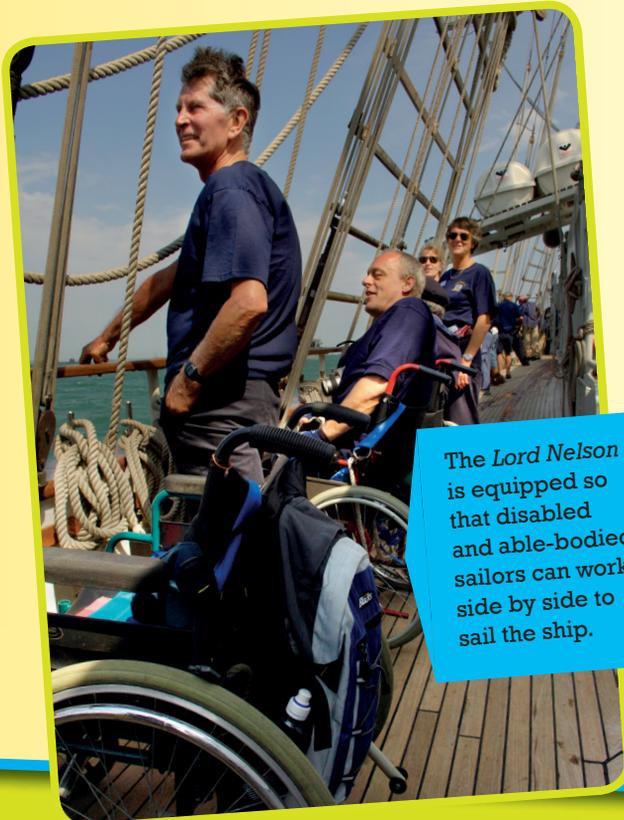
To Help and Inspire

Even during grim, pain-filled days, Hansen kept pushing the wheels of his chair around and around. Why continue his journey? Because he had a message to give to the world. He knew that people with disabilities were often ignored or neglected. He was determined to show what a wheelchair-user could achieve. Hansen refused to be invisible!

Everywhere Hansen went, he chatted to crowds, visited schools and colleges, and gave interviews. Sometimes he hardly had time to sleep. By the time he wheeled himself home to Vancouver, Canada, in May 1987, he had become a national hero and an international celebrity. He had survived an extraordinary around-the-world adventure that had pushed him to the limits of his endurance.

“The Hansen Effect”

Today, Hansen uses his fame to raise money for good causes. His words and actions have inspired millions of people—supporters call this “the Hansen effect.” Hansen still loves sports, especially fishing. He campaigns to protect the environment and to create “a healthier, more inclusive” world, not just for people in wheelchairs, but for everyone.



The *Lord Nelson* is equipped so that disabled and able-bodied sailors can work side by side to sail the ship.

Tall Ship Team

In 2012, a team of sailors with disabilities set off from London to travel around the world on a tall, fast, old-fashioned sailing ship. The ship is called the *Lord Nelson*, named after a British naval hero who lost one arm and one eye.

ELLEN MACARTHUR

GOING SOLO ON THE SEAS

Would you go without school lunch and save the money to buy a boat? Do you think you could make a solo voyage around Britain aged only 18? Would you be prepared to live for months in a shipyard shack, rebuilding a yacht for ocean racing? Champion sailor Ellen MacArthur did all that and more.

Born in 1976, in Derbyshire, England, MacArthur fell in love with boats during a family vacation to the coast when she was just eight years old. She began to dream of sailing and of having wonderful adventures.

Ellen MacArthur celebrates arriving home after achieving the fastest solo circumnavigation in 2005.



Then and Now

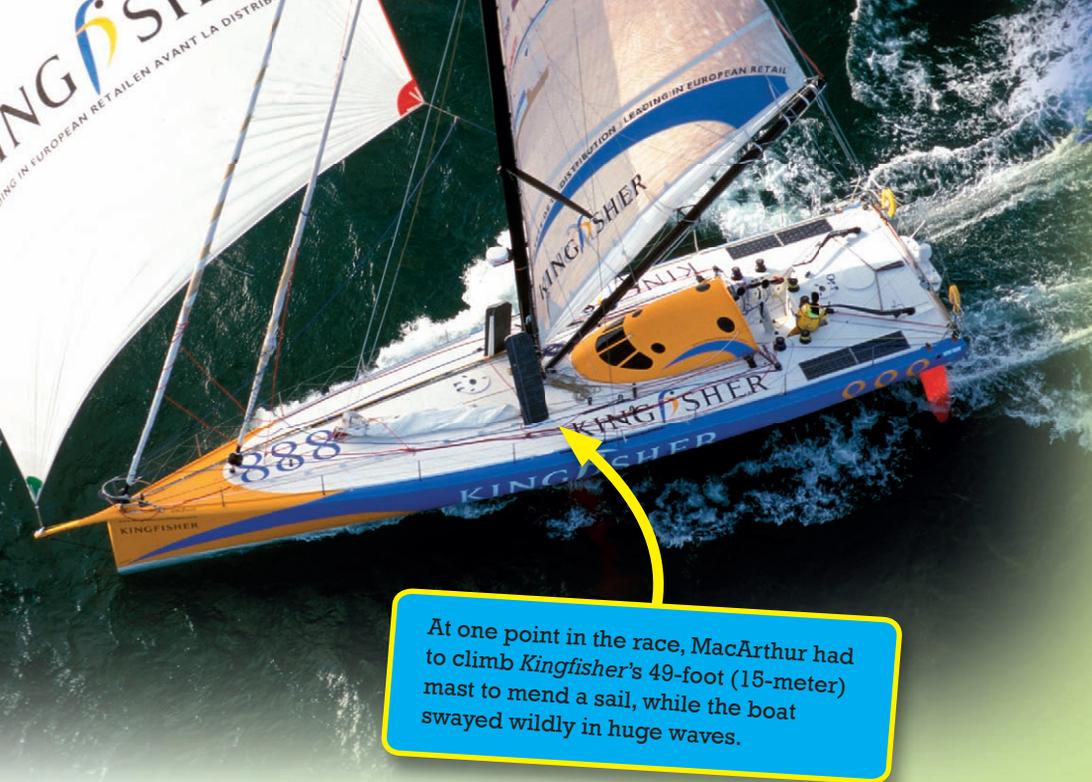
The first solo nonstop sailing circumnavigations were made by Britons Sir Francis Chichester in 1966–1967 (274 sailing days, with one break for urgent repairs) and Sir Robin Knox-Johnston in 1969 (nonstop 312 days). In 1988, Kay Cottee of Australia made the first solo nonstop circumnavigation by a woman (189 days).



It took Francis Chichester nine months and a day to sail around the world in his boat *Gipsy Moth IV*.

Early Achievements

MacArthur's early career as a sailor was tough and often lonely. In 1997, three years after her brave around-Britain voyage, she raced solo across the Atlantic, covering 3,100 miles (5,000 kilometers) in just 33 days. In 1998, she came in first for her class of boat in another transatlantic race—the grueling Route de Rhum. Still only 22, MacArthur was honored as “Yachtsman of the Year,” a title given to the sailor who most impresses a team of expert judges. Suddenly, she was famous!



At one point in the race, MacArthur had to climb *Kingfisher's* 49-foot (15-meter) mast to mend a sail, while the boat swayed wildly in huge waves.

The Vendée Globe Challenge

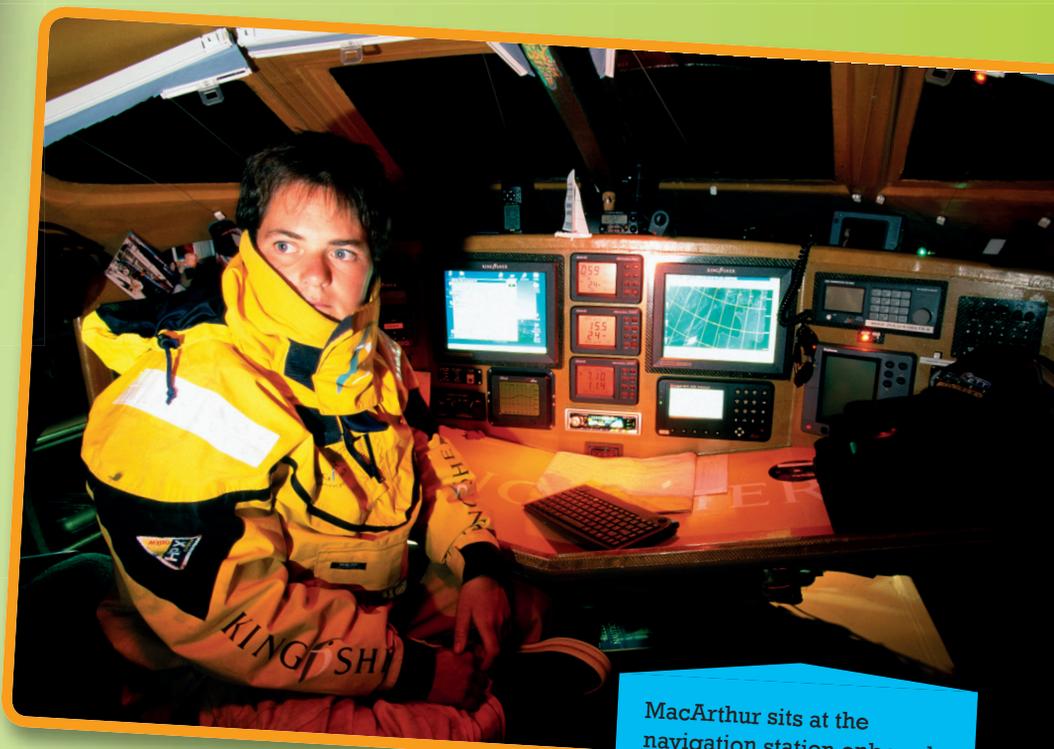
MacArthur's fame led to sponsorship and a splendid new boat: the 10-ton, single-hulled *Kingfisher*. In 2000, MacArthur set off in her sleek, fast new boat for the Vendée Globe around-the-world challenge. This was more than a long-distance ocean race. It was a life and death adventure!

Vendée competitors have to sail nonstop through the world's most savage seas, battling icebergs, storm-force winds, and waves that can reach 65 feet (20 meters) high. They must also cope with lack of sleep, exhaustion, and sheer terror! Accidents often happen—boats can be wrecked and sailors can break their arms and legs. Some have even died. MacArthur beat the odds and surged home after 94 days, in 2001. She was the youngest person and the fastest woman to have sailed around the world, nonstop, singlehanded.

"It was the hardest challenge of my life, but I knew I had to do it."
Ellen MacArthur,
on the 2000 Vendée
Globe race

A Team Effort

MacArthur was extremely brave, strong-minded, and resourceful; she was also a very skillful sailor. But no one wins such achievements completely on their own. On both her around-the-world voyages, MacArthur was helped by an expert onshore team made up of doctors, navigators, weather forecasters, psychologists, and nutritionists. They gave her advice by radio or through the Internet.



MacArthur sits at the navigation station onboard the *Kingfisher*.

Then and Now

Before 2000, only one Briton had completed the Vendée Globe race: Pete Goss in 1997. The French have the best record in this challenge. In fact, in 1990—the first time the race was held—only French sailors finished the journey.



Designed and built for Fossett in the United States, GlobalFlyer was made of plastic and carbon fiber, with a single turbojet engine.

GlobalFlyer

Just three years after his balloon flight, Fossett was ready to try another circumnavigation: alone, nonstop, without refueling. This time he was piloting an experimental plane called GlobalFlyer. Packed full of jet-propellant for the long flight, the plane could easily catch fire and explode.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

GlobalFlyer's slim, streamlined wings measured 114 feet (34.8 meters) across—half as wide as a jumbo jet. However, the pilot's capsule was only 7 feet (2.3 meters) high, with the roaring jet engine frighteningly close behind. Fuel was stored in two huge "pods" on either side. The plane could travel at more than 285 miles (460 kilometers) per hour.

Cramped Conditions

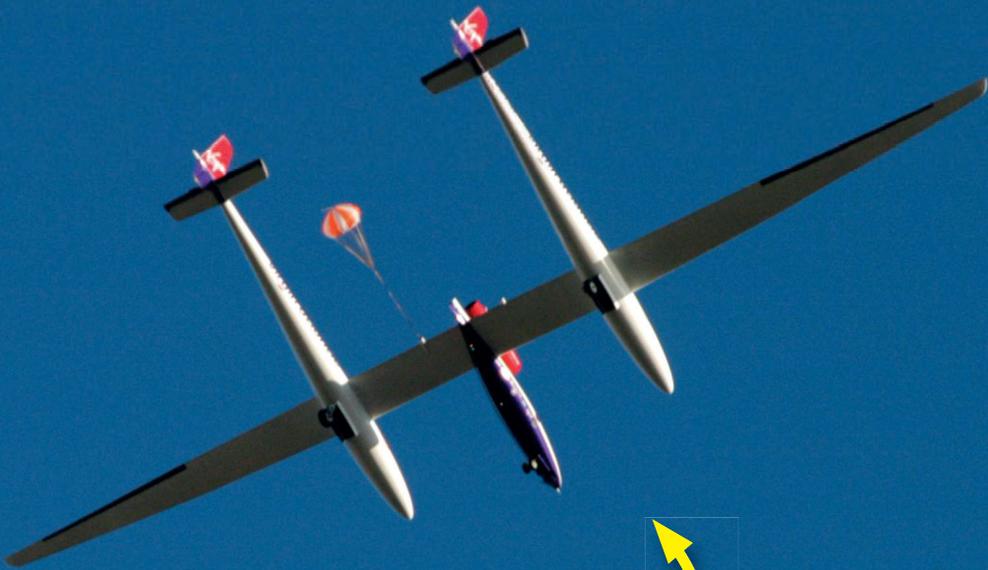
Fossett set off in 2005. He was strapped into the tiny pilot's capsule, with barely enough room to turn round or lie down. His only nourishment came from milk-based drinks, and his pilot's suit was fitted with waste-collection tubes. Although the plane had autopilot controls, Fossett couldn't doze for more than a few minutes. There was also the risk that he might suffer from dangerous jetlag and mental confusion.

Kansas to Kansas

He began his journey traveling eastward from Salina, Kansas. There was a frightening moment over the Pacific Ocean, when Fossett thought the GlobalFlyer was running short of fuel. But this proved to be a false alarm and Fossett flew on bravely. After 67 hours in the air, he finally arrived back in Kansas, having traveled 22,936 miles (36,912 kilometers). All alone, without stopping or refueling, he had flown right around the world!



Fossett in the tiny cabin of GlobalFlyer. During the journey, he had to stay alert for days and nights without a break.



Don't Stop Trying!

Two circumnavigations were a fantastic achievement, but in 2006 Fossett climbed into the GlobalFlyer cockpit once again. His plan this time was to complete the longest nonstop solo flight ever made. Just over 76 hours later, he landed at Bournemouth, England, after a journey of 25,766 miles (41,467 kilometers). This was right around the world—and then some! No one had ever flown so far without stopping.

GlobalFlyer in the skies above Florida, ready to begin Fossett's third around-the-world race.

A Future Record?

Today, engineers and aircraft designers are working on a new type of plane, to try to beat Fossett's long-distance record. The Solar Impulse is a plane powered by sunlight and is already being tested in the United States.

A Tragic End

The following year, in July 2007, Fossett was made a member of America's National Aviation Hall of Fame in Dayton, Ohio. In his speech of thanks, he promised to keep on breaking records. "I'm not done!" he declared.

"He led an extraordinary, absolutely remarkable life."
British businessman Richard Branson, paying tribute to his friend Steve Fossett

Tragically, Fossett's life of adventure ended soon after. In September 2007, he took off to make an air survey of land in Nevada and California. Friends said he was searching for a site for his latest daring exploit—a bid to break the land-speed record in a superfast car. But Fossett never returned. His crashed plane was found on a mountainside, with his remains close by.

After his circumnavigation successes, Fossett was often asked to speak at events, inspiring others to challenge themselves.

