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John Paul Kostecki

June 7, 1964 -
Birthplace: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

"I was more scared on BMWOracle's big trimaran than I was at any time during the Volvo Ocean

Several tennis players have won four major tournaments over a two-year period to register a "grand slam." In baseball, grand slam home runs are belted at the rate of several a month. But only one person has ever achieved sailing's grand slam by winning an Olympic medal, the Volvo Ocean Race, and the America's Cup. That person is John Kostecki.

Kostecki started sailing at age eight at the Richmond (CA) Yacht Club. At age 17, he won the

Sears Cup, a national championship for sailors 13 to 18. At 18, he won the Sunfish World Championship. He entered because the regatta was being held in California. He and some friends found a very windy practice area and worked until they were proficient in boats they hadn't previously sailed (three of them finished in the top five). A student of his sport, Kostecki began accumulating world championships in ever larger boats -- 11 in all. Kostecki won his Olympic silver medal in Korea, 1988, in Solings.

In 2001-2002, in his second Volvo Race, Kostecki skippered *illbruch* to a convincing win after surviving a bad night 50 miles off Cape Town, South Africa, with a leak that threatened to sink his boat. For the 2010 America's Cup, his fifth as tactician, Kostecki joined the *BMW Oracle* team on their 110-foot trimaran. Having raced a 40-foot catamaran in the 1990s in preparation for the short-lived Pro-Sail series, the multihull learning curve wasn't too steep. "It was very similar to Volvo sailing," he says, "very fast, requiring faster decisions, and you are constantly wet." A smart tactical call by Kostecki in Race Two of the 2010 match helped *BMW Oracle* nail the victory.

As he prepares for the defense of the 2013 America's Cup in multihulls, Kostecki has again been constantly wet. He and skipper James Spithill won the 2011-2012 America's Cup World Series raced in 45-foot catamarans.

- Roger Vaughan

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