

= Andrew Simpson ( sailor ) =

Andrew James Simpson , MBE ( 17 December 1976 ? 9 May 2013 ) , nicknamed " Bart " , was an English sailor . He won a gold medal at the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing , as crew for skipper Iain Percy in the Star class representing Great Britain . Simpson was killed in the capsize of the catamaran he was crewing on 9 May 2013 , while training for the America 's Cup in San Francisco Bay .

= = Career = =

Simpson started his competitive sailing career in the Laser class , before switching to the heavier Finn class . He claimed the bronze medal at the 2003 ISAF Sailing World Championships in Cadiz in the Finn class ; his training partner Ben Ainslie took the gold , with Great Britain topping the medal table .

Simpson then moved to the two @-@ man Star class , partnering lifelong friend Percy ; they won a bronze medal at the 2007 ISAF Sailing World Championships in Cascais to qualify for the 2008 Summer Olympics . The pair won the gold medal in Beijing in the Star class . After winning the Olympic gold , Percy and Simpson took a break from Star sailing and were in the TeamORIGIN afterguard for the 2010 America 's Cup . In 2010 , he and Percy won the Star World Championships in Rio de Janeiro .

Simpson and Percy made the podium in every meeting of the ISAF Sailing World Cup in 2012 , including gold at the Hyeres French World Cup regatta . They competed at the 2012 Olympic Games , again in the Star class , failing to defend their title despite being in the lead throughout the competition , but winning the silver medal . After the Star class was removed from the Olympic sailing disciplines , Simpson turned his attention to the America 's Cup , moving to San Francisco to train in March 2013 . He was known for his athleticism , and for his attention to detail in preparing the boat to obtain the best possible performance .

= = = Death = = =

Simpson was killed on 9 May 2013 , during training for the 34th America 's Cup , when the Swedish Artemis Racing team yacht he was aboard capsized near Treasure Island in San Francisco Bay . The yacht , a 72 @-@ foot catamaran with a rigid , wing @-@ like sail , was turning downwind and bearing away when it flipped over and broke into pieces . Simpson was trapped underneath its hulls for approximately ten minutes , and attempts to revive him by doctors afloat and subsequently ashore were unsuccessful . The cause of the accident is unknown . An investigation was initiated by the United States Coast Guard which involved San Francisco police and the America 's Cup management .

In the aftermath of the accident , safety concerns were raised over the new AC72 class of yachts which had been chosen to compete in the 2013 America 's Cup . This was the second accident involving the class ; in October 2012 an Oracle Team USA AC72 also capsized in San Francisco Bay during training , causing substantial damage but no serious injuries . Christopher Clarey , writing in The New York Times , described the class as " high @-@ speed and high @-@ risk . " Stephen Park , who heads the British Olympic sailing team , commented : " they 're very high powered and the loads on them are huge ... these boats are untrodden waters for sailing . A lot of the loads and a lot of the equipment is new and there are a lot of unknowns and things being tested . " Sailing journalist Stuart Alexander , writing in The Independent , stated that the AC72s are seen by some as " death traps . " Simpson is the third sailor to be killed during training for the America 's Cup . A steward was knocked overboard and drowned in 1935 , while Spanish sailor Martin Wizner died in 1999 , after being struck on the head by a piece of equipment that became detached . In early @-@ June 2013 , it was announced that the programme of events for the 2013 America 's Cup would be significantly reduced in response to Simpson 's death . Later that month , a review committee presented 37 proposed modifications to the event to an international jury which the

committee deemed necessary to be fulfilled in order for the event to go ahead altogether .

John Derbyshire , performance director of the Royal Yachting Association , described Simpson as " a huge inspiration to others , both within the British Sailing Team and across the nation " . Other tributes were paid by fellow sailors Ainslie and Percy , Olympian sport shooter , Peter Wilson , British Olympic Association 's director of elite performance , Clive Woodward , and British Foreign Secretary , William Hague , amongst others . His funeral was held at Sherborne Abbey in his home town of Sherborne in Dorset .

= = Honours = =

Simpson was appointed Member of the Order of the British Empire ( MBE ) in the 2009 New Year Honours .

= = Personal life = =

Born in Windlesham , Surrey in 1976 , where he lived and moved to Sherbourne . He first learned to sail aged four or five , while visiting his grandparents at Christchurch , Dorset , and later sailed in a Seafly dinghy with his father , Keith . His talent brought him to the notice of Jim Saltonstall , who coached him in the Royal Yachting Association youth squad . Simpson attended Pangbourne College , a mixed boarding school in Berkshire , which originated as a nautical college , coaching students in sailing , seamanship and navigation . He studied at University College London , gaining a degree in economics . In addition to sailing , he was a keen footballer .

Affectionately known as " Bart " , after the character Bart Simpson , from the American animated series of the same surname . Simpson was described as having " steely determination and focus " but being " diplomatic , softly spoken " . He is survived by his wife Leah and their two sons , Freddie and Hamish .