

I was never in the Canaries and I hadn't SOled for several weeks, my ranking had been slipping and a lot of fleetmates were preoccupied trying to get to Abu Dhabi, so I said to myself: must take the Santa Monica Rum Regatta seriously.

Unfortunately my start was inauspicious, featuring an overly late gybe from a broad reach to a square reach about 3.5nm SSE of Maspalomas. I was in a meeting. Seeing a bit of a hole lingering in front of El Hierro I overcompensated with a very pretty curved track over North. Check it out.

The beauty about being behind is that you can see what the others are doing. This is easily as useful as running qtVlm. As remarked by Joanne, the winds across the race area were unusually steady over the entire holiday weekend, so leaders 5nm ahead were very likely to provide useful ideas to follow. Copy and improve. Do not innovate: more mutterings to myself.

Two other things were going to be important: cornering and BBQ avoidance, and these elementary skills, rather than the 'follow the leader' intention, paid me dividends. BBQrs dropped away one by one. Rumskib and Henrys definitely I saw coming to grief, and was it Smo? And many others. Carnage really. And at every cape, point and mark, there were always a few loose rounders gifting places to greedy bonknhoot.

Of course I didn't always 'follow the leader'. Silly billybonk! Three deviant navigational choices spring to mind. Beating across from La Gomera to Tenerife I tacked early rather than carried on all the way into the rocks. Close-hauled along the east coast of Fuerteventura, I tacked into what looked like a windbend. Twice. It wasn't there. Just less wind. And finally and most costly on the long run down from Salvagem Grande back to La Palma, I sailed too deep into a wind that lifted sharply before it became time to gybe. Lesson here: hotting up by more than 5 degrees is not necessarily a no-no.

But others also made mistakes, and so it was that bonk inexorably progressed up the rankings. But Rafa and Zero always stayed that elusive 5nm ahead of bonk, extending their lead by a further 1.5nm on the last run. NZL_Scotsman got that last one absolutely right to pinch 3rd from Lou who perhaps lost interest and gybed too late for La Palma.

So that, together with a useful placing in the B2B2 off Eastern Oz, was two TopTens over the weekend, and a paler skin and redder eyes. Addicted.

/bonknhoot