

I started off as if it were a practice race, but soon we reached open ocean and I had no idea what to do. Luckily there were lots of boats around me who knew. I checked the wx slider and decided that the boats going south were probably right. I followed them. Every evening I tried to predict what the boats around me would do, and set DCs to keep me in the group. I wasn't always right (example, I tacked about 2 hours too soon, thinking the winds were turning more than they actually did), and often ended up a bit too far north or south. I lost some hours to the leader in this process.

Then, about 4 days in, I really had no idea what the people around me would do: go on west, or start going north early on. I broke out my router for the first time this race. The router told me that for me, being more north than originally intended, going further north was best. I set DCs based on the routing and got some sleep.

The next morning I found that not many had gone for the north option.. There weren't many boats around me any more, but still enough to get a clear idea of where to go. To my surprise the boats south of me got bad weather, they needed to go north sooner and when they merged with us, I somehow found myself in the front group again. Not much boats to follow, but a lot to cover.

Then, another moment where I wasn't sure what to do. I broke out the router again and it gave me two options: gybe north, or go south and keep gybing the whole next day. I didn't want to do a whole day of gybing, so I decided to take the more risky and adventurous route north. Not many chose to go north. This time there was no one in front of me to follow. I was sailing together with bonknhoot and DIKKEHENK, having rumskib right behind us. We gybed south again and the southern part of the fleet start to come north. As we got closer it became clear that the southerly route was faster.

Once again I found myself in the situation where I had to choose between north now, or north later. Going north later would mean I'd merge with the fleet, somewhere in 30th place. I didn't break out the router this time, I didn't think it would get me much wiser. It would probably tell me to merge with the fleet, but I didn't want to. I chose to go north, taking my chances. bonknhoot joined, DIKKEHENK didn't, rumskib didn't, psail joined from the southern fleet and went north with us (a bit late though).

When the rest of the fleet got stuck in the blue, we sailed around it and, to my surprise ended up in front of the whole fleet. It was really hard to follow other boats now, with only one boat (bonknhoot) in front of me. I was second... That wasn't supposed to happen! I just managed not to get too competitive and spend too much time on sol. If I would've been in first place, I might have started setting alarms for midnight Wx updates and stuff, in order to stay in first. Thank you bonknhoot, you kept me sane, and let me focus on some other important stuff :)

Without routing it was hard to find the right balance between going south, anticipating the windshift, and going east to get to the finish. I went too far south and let ghibli pass me. psail was in a scary (for me) place, but I managed (while asleep) to finish a few minutes in front of him.

So, I routed twice, skipped at least one wx every day, set DCs manually and got third place. You could say I was lucky, but that's boring. Let's just say that, apart from two or three little decisions I made on my own, it was the *"wisdom of the crowd"*.

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