

The race was my first time on the top step of the podium, so it was a special race for me. Like any race, either on line or on the water, I had what I thought was a good plan, but I also had some good luck along the course.

The race start to North Head was pretty simple: a “point and shoot” straight line route for me and I was lucky to round in first. North Head provided the first decision point, head up and keep going on port, or tack and stay to the down side of the knock. The right decision was to tack, but the harder decision was when to make the tack for Motuhoropapa Island. The fastest route would be to make only 1 tack, but you would be calling that tack a long way from the mark, in a significant lift on the port tack. Historically I over stand in these situations. I end up with good boat speed into the mark, but not enough speed to over come the extra distance sailed. Rumslib and I tacked at almost the same time and I was able to hang onto the lead at the island and on the short reach over to Ahaaha Rocks.

It was on the leg from Ahaaha Rocks, around Te Miro Bay, to Rocky Bay Buoy where my race was almost lost. Since dinner was on the table, I made a quick decision to gybe immediately at Ahaaha Rock. By the time I ate and gybed for Te Miro Bay, I was varying between 3rd and 4th and I thought my chance for a win was gone. At this point Dingo was in control and was going to be tough or impossible to pass. As I headed for the gybe at Rocky Bay Buoy, I remembered how badly I messed up the gybe last year- I took myself out of the top 5 and struggled to stay in the teens at the finish. I was determined to have a good gybe. I laid everything out, and had the exact point I hoped my boat would stop and I could execute the gybe command. As we all know it rarely happens as we plan, but this was my lucky day. My boat stopped .002 from my desired point and I was able to execute my planned gybe. Unfortunately for Dingo he had a bad gybe and that took him out of the lead. Racing luck(?) - but I went in 3rd. and came out of the gybe in 1st.

From Rocky Bay Buoy to Bean Rock Mark was again straight line, point and shoot for me. The final reach to the finish was a little more interesting then I had hoped it would be. My calculations showed the fastest route would be straight down the rhumb line to the finish. The top 3 were extremely close and when they started falling off to the low end of the line (sailing faster, but a longer path) , I went down to cover. Eventually we got on a course parallel to the rhumb line for the finish. That was one of the longest .9nm legs I will probably ever sail.

Any of the top 3 finishers could have won. Plus add in Dingo- had he not had the issue with the gybe, I am sure would have been tough to beat if he lead around Rocky Bay Buoy. Any time I can stay with Franci, Rumslib, Sassy63, Dingo and the others in the top 10, it is a good day for me. Today the sailing gods smiled on me and gave me the extra piece of luck to make it to the top.

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