

Twenty two days of sailing is quite an ocean race, though looking back at the track, we didn't really get out in to the ocean much on this one. That probably explains why the leading boats had almost identical tracks.

In a race of two parts, the first leg was up to Recife before we rounded that most eastern part of South America and headed for the Caribbean. My group gybed out to sea early on after leaving Punta del Este in search of stronger winds, and the advantage of this route was a while coming as the inshore boats surged ahead. By the time we reached Recife we had a reasonable lead, but the doldrums lay ahead.

Having been out to sea relative to the fleet up until this point, we reversed positions and whilst the main fleet headed out to sea, my group gybed up the coast close to shore in lighter winds but with good wind angle. That proved to be the best position to squeeze through the doldrums and the tricky task of navigating the Caribbean lay ahead.

As it turned out, the WX pushed us up the eastern edge of the islands so the task of gybing/navigating through the islands wasn't forthcoming. Pity, as it would have set up more alternative tactics and much more excitement if we'd had to weave our way through the atolls more.

It was a bit of a progression as we headed north though this proved to be my undoing. A good night's sleep as we headed NNW from Turks and Caicos saw me sail too wide compared to Outlaw and especially Ita. I lost a good 15 minutes to Outlaw and never got it back, and I lost my second position to Ita who sailed more smartly than me all the way home. I tried all the tricks in my book, got close to Ita, but a couple of forgotten DCs kicked in while I was away from the helm within an hour of the finish so I never got to see the antifoul on Ita's hull in the way I'd hoped!

A bunch of eleven boats finished in the lead pack and all sailed really well over a long long race. Congrats to all, but especially Outlaw and Ita. Great sailing guys! And thanks as usual to Javakeda who kept me company through some long nights and kept me honest all the way. Always fun sailing with you Java.

Dingo / July 2014