

It was not an easy race, characterized by swinging light and medium winds, with constant and gradual tendency to clockwise rotation.

It could be divided into three parts: the first part with the westerly winds, the central part with North-East winds and the third one with southerly winds ... until the final doldrums with 360° turning wind in the lagoon ... but it has been irrelevant for the top positions, at that point, yet defined.

It was, then, a race in which I have always tried to get as quickly as possible within the opportune wind for jibing or tacking.

The wx were quite faithful and have complied with the provisions expectations.

I think that the central part was the highlight of the strategy, the one in which we were sailing with north-east winds.

The choice was whether to approach soon the Japanese southern shoreline, or remain with the “tacking” at the centre-east side.

Going northward, toward the Japanese coast, you could take advantage by the best angle with wind from the south in approaching the lagoon. Conversely, going first to the east, you could gain well along the whole leg upwind to the north, slipping in speed on the rotation of the wind to the south.

Missing 250 miles to the end began the weekend and many of us - myself included - we had real-sail.

Fortunately, as I said, the wx has never changed predictions.

So the fleet spread with close duels and long distance controls;

Rumskib led the group to the right, dueling with Bonknhoot and pushing himself much to the east;

A little more conservative guys standing in the offshore group, were we have seen close duels between myself and Franci, rafa, NzI_Scotsman and Karriv.

Tyger and hmm, instead, drove the northward group toward the coast of Japan.

Until the end, the podium positions were alternated, now favouring those in the North, now those in the East!

During this time, I have always tried to find more pressure and angle than others just going a few miles to the north (may be too much, I guess); on the other hand, rumskib, perhaps, went too much to the east. Very good in reading the “tacking” for Bonknhoot, rafa, Franci, Karriv, and NzI_Scotsman. But, at 18:00 UTC on Sunday 14th, the top ten was still not defined!

We all were very close, but the podium seemed to be for Bonknhoot, rumskib, and one of us other.

Now, the only ace that I thought I'd play, at that point, was to anticipate 3 or 4 miles the last tack toward the north (so that to having some edge on both right and left for any possible strategies to be done in the final)and wait for the update weather.

The wx 22:30 UTC on Sunday seemed to condemn the choice of Japanese shore because the south wind rotation has slowed about an hour, forcing then Tyger, hmm & Co to narrower sailing in approaching the lagoon.

At that time, I was sure out of the podium; I was #6 or #7 but I saw that I could attack!

I had a chance. If I had sailed on the lower polar, without succumbing to the temptation to speed and round with the wind, I would have found myself more downwind of everyone and with better angle in approaching the lagoon.

I decided to try. The final part, therefore, was very, very challenging; I chose to stay at the helm and not to entrust this part to dcs (and obviously in Italy.... it was night time!!)

Mom! What a suffering - for 6 hours - remaining slower and lower than everyone, to defending the position of downwind ... but then, in the end, the effort has paid good: the morning after, I got the downwind, I had the better angle than those to the east (rafa, Franci, Karriv, NZL_Scotland) and I was the favourite one to grab the 3rd place. And I got it.

The finish, in the lagoon, with very light wind and 360° of rotation, has not reserved any problems of tactics, just a lot, a lot of patience!

Well SOLers, thank you all for the duels (both for closed and long distance), congratulations again Bonknhoot, rumskib, my compatriot Franci, and all those who were finished in the top20, and excuse me if I forgot to mention someone else of you, dear friends and opponents.... You are so much!

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