

When I looked at the wx when setting my start DC it became apparent that the winds were a lot stronger than last year and as such, with the polar of the Seacart, there was not a lot of difference between the 3 main routes on the 1st leg. I chose the middle option as there was less distance to cover and it gave options to bail out if the strategy wasn't working. Eventually the middle and southern routes were about the same with the northern route being about 1/2 nm slower. The 1st mark saw FR_jeoffreydepayrac_CDT round first with Sassy who led the southern group about level with me.

As we started the second leg FR_jeoffreydepayrac_CDT took a wide course west with 3 or 4 other boats while the rest of the fleet stayed pretty much close to the rum line. I realised that the wind was shifting round to make life difficult at the end of the leg for the western boats and decided that I would try to maximise my advantage by keeping east. I gambled by pinching further E than the rest of the fleet which would of course cost me boat speed at first but would pay dividends at the end of the leg. Fortunately, the gamble worked and I made the mark just ahead of the fleet.

Tango, who was my closest competitor at the mark, made a slight error and that allowed Sassy and I to pull away. Most of the fleet decided to take the SW channel as this was the most direct route. It was however just a few degree in excess of the optimum downwind angle. The question then became who could reduce this effect best. Initially both Sassy and I chose similar strategies pinching a lot at first to reduce the effect for most of the rest of the leg. Tango, on the other hand seemed to opt for a strategy of taking the direct course. So my strategy changed to cover both Swedes. Sassy made the most of this as we approached the line and as we rounded the last corner I felt sure I had lost my chance of a 1st SOL win for the second year in a row.

Fortune it seems was on my side and I crossed the line 10 secs ahead of Sassy with Grabbiente (who I still don't know where he came from!) 3rd. Thanks to Mistli for allowing us to share her birthday - Many Happy Returns!!!!

MustangMark / November 2014