

## SWR 2014-2015 LEG 1

This race would happen in a time when I had to do a lot of IRL traveling, but it was too important a race to skip, so I decided to start anyway, hoping for the best.

Once out of Gibraltar I headed south sailing along the coast of Africa with the leading group. A big windhole was forming parallel to the coast and I decided it would be risky to pass between the windhole and the coast. At first I began pointing higher aiming to pass west of the hole, but after noticing that I was losing to the leaders down the coast, and also to boats that were more to the west, I decided to tack and go westward until I was clear of the windhole and got a favorable windshift to tack down south. At the beginning my ranking dropped significantly but after a few days I was in the group of about 20 boats on the west that was clearly ahead of the boats that stayed longer near the African coast. And the advantage kept growing. This resulted to be the most significant move for the great result I had in this race.

When I got to Noronha I was in top 10. Thereafter the route towards the finish was quite predictable so no big changes happened. Already into the last week of the race we entered into a more unstable area that allowed for some strategic moves and I achieved to improve and look towards a place in the podium.

A couple of days before finishing I realized that my boat would arrive to the finish line while I would be literally flying between Madrid and Lima, 12 hours in the air. Nevertheless forecasted winds looked stable so it would be relatively easy to set a DC to cross the line.

But a few hours before boarding things changed dramatically since a windhole and a dramatic windshift appeared directly on my boat's way to the finish. It was now extremely difficult to DC with enough precision to hit the line. Moreover if I was not be able to see the crucial 22:30 wx. The dedication of 4 weeks was at risk; I needed someone to steer the boat through the windhole and windshift so I mailed our friend Piero (WIN) and he accepted gladly to do this for me. I deeply appreciate this from the real gentleman Piero is.

I want to congratulate aner for his great win, also JoeBannon who fought a lot and achieved also a great result. Also I congratulate the top finishers, especially Dingo who had an impressive comeback. I obviously couldn't greet anybody in the chat since I was literally flying.

Rafa

November 2014