

RAYC – The Yates Cup 2014 Race Report

The virtual and real fleets in The Yates Cup 2014 experienced ideal sailing conditions with relatively constant winds and flat seas.

For the SOL fleet, the race was in three parts. First part from the start to Channel Island, second part from Channel Island to Poor Knights and the third being the run home from the Poor Knights to the finish.

The constant wind direction meant that the best course was a straight COG on DCs from the start to Rangitoto and from Rangitoto to Channel Island. With a breakfast start for me, it meant that I could be back at lunch time for the Channel Island mark. I was happy to find that I was just in the top 20 approaching Channel Island.

The section of the race from Channel Island to Cuvier Island and on to Poor Knights Islands required some hands on the helm. Those who put in a short gybe south after rounding Channel Island were able to set up a better approach to Cuvier Island without being squeezed by the downwind VMG and I found myself in 6th place rounding Cuvier Island.

The only tool that I used during the whole race was the isochrone tool in the Wx Inspector. From a look at the isochrones I could see that a wind shift after rounding Great Barrier Island would head those boats that went north of the rhumb line. Shortly after rounding Cuvier Island, I put in a tack towards the island so that I could round the mark close to shore and then head south of the rhumb line to Poor Knights Island. I was surprised to see most boats staying wide around the mark and keeping north of the rhumb line. The southern group included most of the eventual top 10 placegetters. As the wind shift came in we stuck close to VMG until we could comfortably get to the Poor Knights ahead of the rest of the fleet. It was at this point that Hirilonde and rafa made their move going for a bit more speed that put them in the lead. I was more conservative just freeing up a little from VMG.

When we hit the lay line to round Poor Knights, Hirilonde and rafa crossed in front me about a quarter of a mile ahead and it was difficult to separate them. I tacked in 3rd place and sx was about another quarter of a mile behind me. These positions were maintained to the finish.

Once around Poor Knights Islands the tactics again favoured a straight line course to the Sail Rock mark and then to get around Takatu Point, Kawau Island and on to the finish.

As this course was very close to optimum VMC and the polar being relatively flat at the TWA, there was almost no chance of passing boats in front or being passed by those behind. The first four boats to round the Poor Knights Islands were the first four boats to cross the finish line back at Orakei.

The real Beneteau First 44.7 in the race, "Atamai", finished about three and a half hours after Hirilonde. The virtual fleet did not have to contend with currents, tides and waves so I think that is close to the real thing. Also, "Atamai" finished 2nd behind yakka on "Promise" in the PHRF division.

Congratulations to Hirilonde and rafa for the close racing and to everyone for competing. A great race.

Tyger