

Upon noticing the Boston-to-Newport Race was open while competing in the SWR Leg 3 last Saturday, I registered and looked ahead to the start wx. Seeing the forecast called for a veering SW wind with more pressure to the North, I set a starting DC of 120 COG for a reasonably low and fast VMC off the line with the plan to update it just prior to the start on Monday. Well, Monday mornings tend to be hectic in my world and after an early meeting at the boatyard I returned to the office and immediately checked in on my 'progress' in SWR Leg 3. And there in the chat was the nearly two-hour old message from RC: "BOSTON-NEWPORT RACE STARTS IN 30 MINUTES!!!" - oohhh shoot!

So I quickly open the Boston-Newport Race and there we are, all lined up in a nice polar arc with ita and most of the fleet well to windward but otherwise looking ok with good company nearby (including fastpassage39). I notice the TWA predictor line is nearly matching the coastline as the WSW wind is veering at the same rate as my J30 is circumnavigating Cape Cod, so I sharpen the TWA up a few degrees to max BS and am now on a perfect path to round the North end of the Cape at max speed – nice!

As we approach the Cape, I am wondering how ita and his followers to the south are planning to round ... what have I missed? Then to our utter astonishment, ita continues straight onto the Cape – apparently he was eager to enjoy a famous New England clambake, despite the cold weather! Meanwhile, fp39, Dingo, rumskib, bonk and the other usual suspects all converge with me at the north end of the Cape in a virtual tie for the lead – now it is a Soldiers March around the Cape as the wind continues to bend towards the North. Minimizing the distance sailed is now the game, hand-steering around each point of land as closely as possible and trying to cut into fp39's slim lead is demanding all my time and attention, when my wife calls: "your friends are here to watch the football game" ... the National Championship Game party I'm 'hosting' has begun!

I hurriedly set some dc's and race home just in time to see Oregon take a 7-0 lead over Ohio State, but instead of celebrating with my friends, I plug in my laptop and start furiously clicking away. "What the hell are you doing?" my wife demands to know, "Oh no, not that stupid imaginary sailing game again!" No worries, I assure everyone – it's an easy race, just a few corners to navigate ... every fifteen minutes. Splitting time between my friends, the game and the race, I cement my reputation as a social misfit while desperately try to out maneuver fp39 and the gang past Martha's Vineyard. Sagging low to take advantage of the veering wind does not work, cutting the corner of Cuttyhunk dangerously close gains me nothing ... my competitors are precision robots who leave nothing on the table.

Finally, it's over – Ohio State has won 42-20, my friends have gone home, my wife has gone to bed, and fp39 remains 0.01nm ahead with no passing lane available ... it's over. I set a COG course for the finish, congratulate fp39 on the win, thank Dingo, rumskib, bonk and the other usual suspects for the close exciting race, and head to bed – content with my first podium finish in a long, long time (thanks to RC).