

## Alaska Round the Islands Sprint 2015 – Report by WINSTON\_4

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Before the introduction of the Hires WX the sprint races were mainly pure business for Super Sprinters : those SOLers brave enough to run fast around the cans , beating the clock and using incredibly bright skills when turning edges and marks ( I have always imagined them with atomic chronographs , ticking at the pace of the pinky boat jumps ;))) ) , whilst my tools have always been only the eyes “actually seeing” the pink over the edge and sending the command when of course is late and a few places have been lost !! LOL

Hires WX have added , even on very short stretches , between one edge and the following one , the technical need for “non straight” course....and that is where WIN can .....” participate to the fest “ ! ;)).

Preparation for this race ( non PYOC ) was basically .....physical and mental , i.e. resolving the psychological stress of needing to be at the helm from 2400 local to 0700 local. ( I had doubts to be still able to do anything like that ) ..LOL

The race itself had initially the usual few turns that , at the end of them , see WIN with the top 20 group , but not leading . It contained two upwind stretches that were only matter of hitting the correct layline , without strategic choices to be made . ( quite interesting to see the effect of Hires on upwind courses , where , due to land mass effect , both tacks were offering equal lifting shift .....amazing !! ) .

Then we need to speak about the two single stretches that made the difference in this race :

The first one was between the north easterly tip of Umak Island and the south easterly tip of Chugul Island , an 8.7 nm stretch where I struck the first attack : the best route was to foot first in better breeze , and to pinch to better angle towards the end of the leg , in lighter breeze ( constant rule in SOL ). Here it was magnified by the wind shifting slightly to the right . I recovered a few places , holding from the end of the leg about 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> position.

The second and determinant one was the final stretch from Ulak Island to the finish line . The majority of the fleet took initially a straight course to the line , whilst I stayed sensibly upwind for a while , in order to tackle the shift in the bottom part with better angle , as well as staying as short time as possible in the lighter breeze bubble that formed across the path . Lou did the same , staying even higher than myself , and for a while I feared that he would overtake me towards the end , but the good line proved to be mine in the end .

The best satisfaction I had at the end of this race was two folds :

- 1) I had proven to myself that I am OOOOOLLLDDDD ....but still capable of taking these masochistic ironmen type of exercises ....;))))))
- 2) I was surrounded all the way through by the best sprinters in SOL :

Lou is by now simply a Sprint legend , whilst iomkiwi , who led the fleet for 95% of the race time , was the bronze medalist of last year’s Sprint Championship , a very valid visiting card to say the least !

This allows me to say that if a victory is greater , the greater is the value of the competition .....then I must say it has been a really great one ! ;)))

Till soon .....THANK YOU ALL MY FRIENDS !!!

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