

Hi guys. I have to be honest and tell you, this time, how Neuroman really has got this podium.

Well, on June 2nd, in Italy, is a holiday. It's the Republic day and this year we also extended the weekend. So I was quiet, on a sunny beach in the south-Italy, enjoying a beautiful summer day; it was 10:00 am local time, 26°C, fair breeze from the sea, sunbed and shade beach-umbrella, a cold coffee to drink in one hand and smartphone with the app of SOL in the other..... and a question: to start the race or not?

The night before I had studied a little bit the race and I had also outlined a general strategy; the 04:30Z wx had removed the blue-bubble almost leaving unchanged the general weather evolution: during the whole northern course, till Dirhami, the wind would make a circle-round for more than 270° to the right, starting from W-SW and ending in S, but did not drop below 3 knots in TWS.

Then I had imagined to start very fast, even with TWA 80°, to the north, reaching the start of the rotation for closing gradually the TWA, then tack and be carried by the shift wind toward the gybe for Dirhami.

By my smartphone, with the Android's app, this could be done without sacrificing the sunbed and some swimming.....and some drinks too!

So I decided to start. Of course it would be difficult to run for the podium, but just to keep fit myself, since Sailonline racing had ended with the end of leg7 SWR and, incredibly I missed SOL !!

After Dirhami I would be at home, and the choices were quite helpful; the wind stopped the rotation, remaining stable from 185°-190°, then rotate again to the right, reinforcing, at the end, up to 19knts. So, coming home, I set a DC for the tack that would take me directly to Paralepa Mark.

But DC was perhaps too early.

Luckily I got home just in time to see, finally in front of a PC, that, within a few minutes, I would be up on a rock; too late to do two tight tacks, and then I decided to force my TWA for brushing the rock and not throw away so much effort,so much study and application :)) :))

But surprisingly, I was in the top-5, Kenza was the leader, Franci, Peskasail and Lou just ahead of me, rafa lurking just behind. After 3 days by the sea, I was a little tired and sunburned, but now the part of the race that had to be done did not appear very challenging and, finally, I was able to play with a PC, putting a few DC and some alarm emergency, I thought, within 5:00 am local time I'd finish the race. So come on! Come on!

Meanwhile at Paralpa, we lost Peskasail..... perhaps for a wrong DC, he went straight in bbq. Sorry, even though in the meantime I was almost on the podium.

There was little to do: basically it was a close-hauled route until Matsiranna lighthouse and the most difficult point was to determine when to tack to Matsiranna. In fact, just around the tack point, there was Heinlaid Island, a small island, but what a buster b...s!!

It was just before the 22:30Z wx and the fleet had a little split: Lou anticipated all of us tacking the first, but it was too early, I guessed; Franci went to tack over the island, but there was too much way to do, I guessed.

So, I, rafa and Kenza, we tacked just before the island then doing 2 more tight tacks for return, paying perf loss instead of more way. In my opinion, it was a good choice and in fact, later, we all were very close during the long descent to Matsi Island. A simple windward leg with a couple of headlands and rocks to avoid.

But, after a while, I made the classic mistake of distraction: adjusting direction I gave cog 47.50 instead of TWA 47.50, and I left toward NE! Aaaarrghhhh. Damn!

There were rafa, number1 and Klyvarn lurking, my perf after double correction has dropped to 80%; rafa inexorably passed me I lost two positions and found myself 6th or 7th in the rank. And it was 01:00 am local time. Affliction!

Ok, I said to myself: about two hours there will be Matsi Island, then bear away for the mark, and then go on arrival.

Cruise mode on, two alarms control may be enough, then, once turned Sorgu Majakas, take the right side of the bay of Parnu, 3 quiet gybes, 3 dc and can go asleep.

But I get better my sums: number1, Lou and Klyvarn were downwind and were forced to sail with a closer TWA (Lou had to make two closed tacks to return and had paid with perf loss), Kenza and Franci, very good sailing, grabbing more wind, they cannot be caught; rafa certainly would not let me pass, but at least I could go back in the top-5 again. And, as it was going, really was not all bad!

Meanwhile, in fact, (still tired and sunburned) I committed another mistake: I did not consider that, with increasing of the wind, the maximum TWA increased from 46.4 to 47.1 and then, for pass Matsiranna lighthouse (before of bearing away for Sorgu Majakas), I should have sailed for about one hour with more than half-a-degree below the best TWA, slowing too much. Ok, then I had to make a last effort (double espresso needed): with WXHD (and max zoom arrows) even for just 0.1 degree TWD downward, I forced the TWA to rise in the wind, for small intervals of two or three minutes, and then reset the optimal TWA. In such way I managed (in about half an hour) to take me up to the wind as much as I was able to surf for more than one hour with cheer TWA towards the promontory of Matsi Island.

And here another surprise: perhaps for an early command, rafa went bbq, losing position and handed me the 4th place! "Dear Rafa", I whispered, "what a gentleman you are! So we're even, 1 to 1. I wrong cog with twa and you, now, return the courtesy to me. A true gentleman".

Then Lou, who had made two tight tacks in the channel, was fairly close and, perhaps, I could also do something to overcome him in the final gybes.

SOL teaches us how often, working on best VMG/TWA, or anticipating a gybe, or choosing the right pin of the finish line, you can expect a photo-finish overtaking; so, now excited, I tried to put him in pressure in the last leg, gaining his downwind in the first and be ready to anticipate the gybe.

But in truth.....I had not to wait a lot, and I had not to work hard to overtake him.

.....Poor Lou! After a brilliant race (as his usual) probably he felt asleep, or have had other problems. The fact is that he did no maneuver and went straight to the rocks at the first gybe, left to me the third place that, in the end, I cut serenely, lied down myself on my bed while the boat was heading to the beaches of Parnu.

Conclusion: a race made for half by smartphone; a bbq saved just in time; one command error and a wrong calculation TWA, three opponents in bbq all this does not deserve the podium.

So, fair play requires me to state that this third place is not mine, it's for Lou, and if not for him, it's for Peskasail or even for rafa. Well done to you, guys, and thank you.