

The VanIsle 360 2015

Race report by StIngFI

What a Race.

If I had known the duration of this race I would never have started. According to the race calendar this was supposed to take no longer than 6 days instead of 8 days and 12h. Last time this race took less than 4 days, in a Seacart30 though.

Started on DC as usual and even did the first gybe on DC. When I got to the helm next morning (local) it didn't look good, position #41 and a whole lot of boats ahead of me. At this time there were already some split up east and west of Texada. My router suggested west and further on the Discovery Passage. I was #6 or 7 of the pack who chose this route. There were several other options, the "in between" option Fastpassage39, Sassy63 and Neuroman. The most easterly group lead by Jepsom, followed by Number1, Henrys, Smo and LittleSurprise. The Western and In between groups were merged with Fastpassage39 leading followed by Rafa. The eastern route proved to be the fastest route as Jepsom was ahead of the western group by more than 8 nm.

The reach to Chatham Point was manageable on DC:s but after the rounding we had headwind with lot of tacking. This resulted in some BBQ:s and quite a reduction in the fleet. My position was steadily improving. Even the leader Jepsom hit land and was stuck for several hours, which cost him 6 positions.

As we rounded Cape Sutil heading to open sea my position had improved to #5, chasing LittleSurprise. After the next rounding there was a wind shift and WX unfavorable to the leaders and Smo took the lead and I overtook LittleSurprise.

There was very little movements in standings in the ocean reach. Luckily we spent the midsummer weekend sailing open waters which allowed for some IRL midsummer partying.

After the rounding of Race Rocks the top 3 was in a quite comfortable lead. The only issue was in which order. Number1 had a DC firing (sat) too early at McMickering Point (actually the next nameless point) where I managed to pass him (sorry Number1).

In the Haro Strait Number1 decided to venture for the Trincomali Channel and Smo and myself went for more open waters in the Salish Sea. This route involved some tight tacking inside Henry Island and between Mayne and Samuel Islands.

Smo stayed ahead about 15 min and I didn't manage to get any closer. The next night (local) involved a tack in the middle of the Salish Sea, and I managed to miscalculate the following route almost hitting the Valdes Island during the night. For some reason I woke up 2:30 (local) without an alarm clock, just in time to correct my course. The rest of that night required alarm clock as we were navigating inside of the Flat Top Islands. At this point the Trincomali Channel route proved to be slower as Number1 was now 45 min behind me.

The last reach to the finish involved a critical gybe but the standings were unchanged. I managed to get closer to the leader and was only 5 min behind at the finish line.

As I recall I BBQ:ed at least 3 times during the race, these were luckily caused by late commands on manual steering and not on DC:s.

By the time I write this, more than 3 days after finishing, there are only 54 boats finished so far, proving what kind of race this was.

"Long Island"
June 25 2015
/StIngFI