

## SAILONLINE WORLD RACE 2014-2015

There is a special attraction in a World race; despite its difficulty it is the event which attracts more Solers. Perhaps because such a long race, that needs so much dedication for such a long time, is paradoxically very forgiving. I mean, in the ocean legs there are some days in which a Soler is not available to concentrate on the race, sets DCs for a day or more and wont lose much, and besides there are plenty of days ahead to make up for any loss. In other words in this kind of race a Soler can be competitive and still not risk to lose his job, business, family, friends, etc.

So trying to win the World Race was a big challenge; 9 months of competition, and 9 legs. Not having a throw out meant that in all the 9 legs the final rankings needed to be good, not extraordinarily good, but consistently good. I calculated that just one leg out of the top 50 would compromise seriously the chances to win the series, even if the other 8 races would be podium places. And how easy it is in the ocean legs to be out of the top 50! It happened to a quite a few top Solers in this series.

The overall strategy for me was to avoid risks especially in the first half of each leg, and then try to go as fast as possible in the second half when all boats started to converge towards the finish. Taking risks in the first half of each leg could put you in a difficult position to recover from.

Of course luck was also needed, and I had it.

The strategy worked very well. Probably I sacrificed some better positions in some races by not taking some risks, but the main objective was the series, and with that perspective I had 8 races with top 10 results, and the other one was a 12<sup>th</sup>, and that did it for me.

The final ranking of the series is very misleading. The series was much more fought than what the final numbers show. After a few of the first legs some of the top Solers started to get some not very good result in some race, so after leg 4 the overall lead was between Nacrr and myself. I really congratulate Nacrr, he wasn't as conservative as myself, he took more risks, and sometimes he was way back in the fleet at some point, but he had an extraordinary capacity to come back up front and managed to get top 10 results in every race. When we got to Lisbon, his homeland, at the end of the last ocean leg, Nacrr was leading the series by a few points. Leg 8 was not very good for either of us, but it was a little worse for him, so I took the lead by a few points, leaving all to be decided in a final fight in leg 9. Unfortunately for Nacrr he must have had some situation which affected his ability to race in the last leg as his performance was completely different as in the rest of the series, I am very sorry for this as he deserved to win the series as much as me. Not very nice to win like this, but I am still happy with my overall performance.

Congrats also to Dingo who finally took second place with very good and consistent sailing also, and of course my thanks and appreciation to everybody who participated in this long but interesting and unparalleled competition. See you all on the next turn of the world!

Rafa; June 2015