

Unfortunately I had real life sailing commitments and couldn't do this quarter's 1st sprint, so I was determined to do my best in this one to make up for some of the lost ground. Determined but less than hopeful because despite racing a small trimarans in real life, I have a really bad track record in the chosen 60ft Trimaran.

This course was a choice of round the island to the north or south and from there it was a case of picking your tacks carefully. I had decided initially to head S but when the wx came in before the start I changed my mind. The N course had a better wind angle to start and would get those who chose it into the stronger airs faster.

As we headed off from the start line, some of the fast boats decided to try and optimise the route to the 1st headland. I decided that as the wind was swinging round from a tail wind to a more favourable reach, and gaining in strength, the best route was the shortest distance. After first headland it was a different story - the wind shift was becoming a little unfavourable – so I decided to optimise the wind angles a little by moving a tad to the inside of the course and thus giving myself a better angle to the next headland, A few boats decided to aim for a very narrow gap, but this meant turning the reach into a beat and manoeuvring a beast that doesn't point well into a very narrow channel.

After the second headland is where the race was really won and lost. Quite a few boats, including SOL legends Rumskib, Winston and Rafa decided to make an early tack south (presumably for a slightly better wind angle). SilverSurfer and I both chose to continue on our course and head out to the stronger winds. One by one, the boats accompanying us tacked off until there were about 5 of us left. SilverSurfer and I both gave the optimum angle a degree or 2 extra respect and that saw us build an advantage on the boats around us.

The crucial point was when to tack south for Groote and the run to the finish line. There was a strategically placed group of islands in the way that meant turning off at the correct time was impossible. However, as I was sailing a couple of degs beyond optimum angle this was not an issue. I was still fearful of Rafa, Rummy and Win, so I decided to hold my tack for a few extra jumps, thus giving a superior boat speed to Groote. This cost me the race! Silver tacked off at the right time and headed down the West side of the gap between the islands, my delay took me to the East side of the channel. Despite the extra boat speed, Silver was gone!

The trio of very fast boats that had taken the inside route all came out slightly ahead of us. However they had to make an extra tack to head south and their performance loss saw Silver and I nudge ahead of them . All that remained was a reach to the line.... and is customary with sprint races – a wait for the computer to sort out the rankings. The top 6 all finished within a minute and I was lucky enough to beat Rafa by 1 second. A quick word for Rummy who was initially shown as a podium finisher and then demoted to 4th and to Win who put the pressure on throughout. I am sure normal service will be resumed in the next race! Fair winds all and thanks for racing.