

## Log Brisbane to Keppel Tropical Yacht Race – 2015

Part 2 of the Bonk Ranking Recovery project (brr.. Derbyshire is not the Med) was Brisbane to Keppel. It went well; indeed it was another one of those relatively rare races, that but for a bit of SS (Skipper Stupidity) might have earned bonkhoot a Gold Medal, but that thought undervalues the performances of kenza and javakeda who sailed superbly, condemning bonk to P3.

All the same, given that IRL, my 86-year old invalid (that is: legal but lame) mother had flown in from Amsterdam that afternoon to stay with us for two weeks, the start at 02:00 BST was a bit of 'an ask', especially since I was going to have to be 'on duty' from 08:00 or so. 'Sleep is Over-Rated' is a well-known SOLer's motto, and when necessary I follow it, which helps if you have to round a sequence of marks in the middle of the 'up-over' night, a challenge which inevitably also discourages a quantum of northern hemisphere entries.

And so it was that in the absence of peskasail, neuroman, StIngF1, Franci, Tall Ship Tyro DIKKEHENK, and A2 (where are you?), to in no particular order name just a few, bonk slomed round the buoys of Moreton Bay through the Skirmish Pass and out North past Mooloolaba into a narrow lead.

A 110nm beam reach to Fraser Island now beckoned; pretty much the easiest point of sailing to defend a lead in IRL, but always tricky in SOL. Qt advised a more-or-less rhumb track to the beach at India Head at near max VMC TWA and then a round-up towards Breaksea Spit. But there was more pressure outside and, as many of us know by now, when windspeeds at grib grid points fall below 6kn, Qt has a tendency to 'over-interpolate' what's in between. Nevertheless, most everybody, including local(ish) boats dingo Tyger and kipper, kept to the rhumb line and I covered. Big mistake: kenza and javakeda sailed lower more away from the coast for initially less BS and less VMC, but as the wind picked up outside, their distance lost stabilised.

I am just not sure what happened next, but I'll blame a WX. The wind started to back around from the West into the South and our TWAs grew. The two likely lads now had better angle, and to get round Fraser Island was going to require a gybe onto starboard well out to sea. All I could do was hope for another, this time more favourable, WX as the wind freed more and more behind bonk, and k and j footed out from under her lee.

The three tracks adjacent illustrate:

- bonk in bright pink
- kenza in light pink
- java in mauve



As can perhaps be gleaned from the chartlet, it was already all over bar the shouting. bonk and kenza carried out to sea the furthest for more TWS, whilst jk gybed a bit early, but (alas) quickly gybed back discarding any previous notion he may have had of getting well inside the curve West to Polmaise. And again, later, jk put in a further few gybes. In chat he claimed he was doing what you might call an 'inverse Vestas'.

Vestas, many will recall, came to grief in the VOR on a reef in the Indian Ocean, and given that Vesta's (not Vestas) are renowned purveyors of beef-curry-in-a-pack, it tickled bonk's warped sense of humour when the SOL BBQ for a while morphed into a Vestas.

Always enjoy the local cuisine!

But I digress.

Rumour has it that Vestas' navigator (a Dutchman I regret to confess) was wind-routing onto very basic charts, i.e. like the ones we see in Qt or perhaps even like the SOL charts. Once he had a route figured he would check this for obstructions using separate more detailed proper navigational charts, so I believe. More than just by dead reckoning, one assumes. Anyway, he got it wrong.

So, in short...

- he routed onto a reef that wasn't there in his router, but was there IRL; whereas, jk explained his gybes...
- as routings to avoid reefs that were there in his router, but were not there in SOL.

An 'inverse-Vestas': 'safe but slow' instead of 'fast and fatal'!

Or in Rumfeldian: Vestas routed onto 'unknown knowns' whereas javakeda routed around 'known unknowns', eheheh!

Anyway, it mattered not a jot, jk stayed c 15mins behind k, and b c 15 mins behind jk, all the way to Keppel, sailing tramlines the whole way.

A great race and great to sail versus IRL buddies, who on this occasion, judging by Spirt of Mateship's elapsed time, enjoyed less favourable winds than NOAA forecast.

Thank you, SOL team.