



Here's a screengrab of how bonk won and then lost our latest hi-res Sprint, Round Inhaca, where that on-line sexist polyglot Wikipedia tells us "at low tide women harvest crabs, oysters and fish". Now, I confess to finding myself too busy to be looking around me when racing one of these mad little sprints, so I can't confirm that Wikipedia is correct on this one, but clearly there is quite a bit of beach at low tide, and our course took us right over it and inevitably some of the SOL fleet joined the comely harvesters for impromptu barbecues. It's a risk you take if you spend too much time googling the scene on the Earth feed.

Personally, I like to do my googling before the race, and when I do I turn to [www.geonames.org](http://www.geonames.org), for just that bit more info on the local topography than Google Earth or Maps gives. SOL takes us to some remote parts of the planet, but surprisingly Inhaca, never heard of, isn't one of them.

And why is that? Because every little cape (dune? beachhead? bluff?) creating the island's geographic outline actually has a name, unlike say those Hudson Bay islands where we have also gone for sprints this year. So, here's a translation:

Inhaca SE = Ponta Torres  
 Inhaca S = Ponta Punduine  
 Inhaca SW = Coral Gardens  
 Inhaca NW = Inhaca Airport  
 Inhaca N = Ponta Mazondue

To the race then. Well, it was a poor turnout really. At the start of the year, the sprint round the Falklands' Bleaker Island had an entry of 130 of which 101 started and 93 finished. It looked like sprinting had got a new lease of life. This one? 118 entries, not too bad, but only 76 starters and 71 finishers (so far). So, for the record, the rest of you's are missing something, guys!

Time was when sprinting through synoptic weather, defined by just one or two course proximate grid points and a small bunch of further remote ones at 0.5° chart intervals, how good your cornering was tended to be the dominant on-line sailing skill required. With NCAR/WRF gribbs more often than not this is no longer the case, and instead tactical decisions (at an un-supported by router level of detail) determine who gets the gun.

I have added five numbered little green lozenges to the screen grab, marking points of sailing round the island, where you could lose or gain.

- 1 You could clear the coast by departing close-hauled on starboard into a quickly freeing light breeze. There was more pressure out to sea, so although it was tempting to ease sheets considerably and curve up later, the extra pressure if you sailed a straighter line was also interesting. I sailed bonk pretty straight, but slightly more curve into the coast would have been better.
- 2 Next was a downwind leg from Ponta Torres to Ponta Punduine, with wind continuing to free. I had decided I'd sail a straight line on an initially hot angle to the gybe point. It turned out my strategy was the most extreme of the fleet and I was little worried "early doors", but it worked "a treat" and bonk went P1 as she closed on Ponta Punduine.
- 3 Turning the corners round Punduine and the bluff to the "Coral Gardens", bonk dropped a place (or two). However, a further tactical opportunity presented itself as there continued to be more pressure to the right, i.e. on the beach. Moreover, there was a hint of a hop available for the leg to the Airport as well. So, I followed the concave contour of the beach more or less, as did Lou, but, I'm not sure of this, perhaps Lou actually hit the beach. Anyway, bonk went P1 again.
- 4 It was now bonk's to loose and loose it bonk did. The wind was lifting and small tweaks in constant TWA was all that was going to be required until a pretty critical tack offshore Ponta Mazondue, and then a bear off onto a reach to cross the line (where?) somewhere. I investigated and drafted a few lines including the lay for Mazondue and what I reckoned was the fastest line to the finish. But my layline was out and I fluffed it, overstanding by at least two server jumps. Stressed, some ropy cornering followed and bonk fell back to P8.
- 5 But "good luck, bad luck" [Z.], the right line for the finish proved tricky for many. As before, more pressure out to sea and the wind now anti-clocking once more had to be weighed against best VMC angle which would have you heading for a crossing one quarter of the length of the line east of the western extremity. bonk (and Lou) went for exactly the opposite end – one quarter west of the eastern extremity (and rumskib and Sadler probably did as well). Result: P4.

Great little race!

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[Z.] A Chinese farmer had an old horse to till his fields. One day, the horse escaped into the hills and when the farmer's neighbours sympathized with the old man over his bad luck, the farmer replied, "Bad luck? Good luck? Who knows?" A week later, the horse returned with a herd of horses from the hills and this time the neighbours congratulated the farmer on his good luck. His reply was, "Good luck? Bad luck? Who knows?"

Then, when the farmer's son was attempting to tame one of the wild horses, he fell off its back and broke his leg. Everyone thought this very bad luck. Not the farmer, whose only reaction was, "Bad luck? Good luck? Who knows?" Some weeks later, the army marched into the village and conscripted every able-bodied youth they found there. When they saw the farmer's son with his broken leg, they let him off. Now was that good luck or bad luck?