

Christmas to Christmas 2015

Race Report

longreacher

This was my first time racing the Christmas to Christmas race, but I knew when I looked at the map that it was going to be a challenge. The distance alone was enough to give one pause to think, but it was the number of SLIs and narrow passageways that had me wondering how many nights I'd be sleeping on the couch with an alarm set to make sure I wasn't having a BBQ somewhere.

The first third of the course wasn't too tough. There were some atolls and reefs to keep an eye out for, but as long as you saw them, they were easy enough to avoid. Like much of the fleet, I initially headed north to catch the trade winds. Surprisingly, once I turned west, I found myself at the pointy end of the fleet, chasing Ratse626 due west for the next 10 days. At one point, I said to my wife, "This is pretty boring, I just keep sailing west!"

Then, things got interesting. It was time to pick a route through Indonesia. I had initially planned on going south, through the Macassar Strait, but at the last moment, saw some better winds north through the Philippines and north of Malaysia. Ratse626 lead the way, but stayed a bit more north, while I dropped south around the Dinagat Islands which gave me the lead of this group.

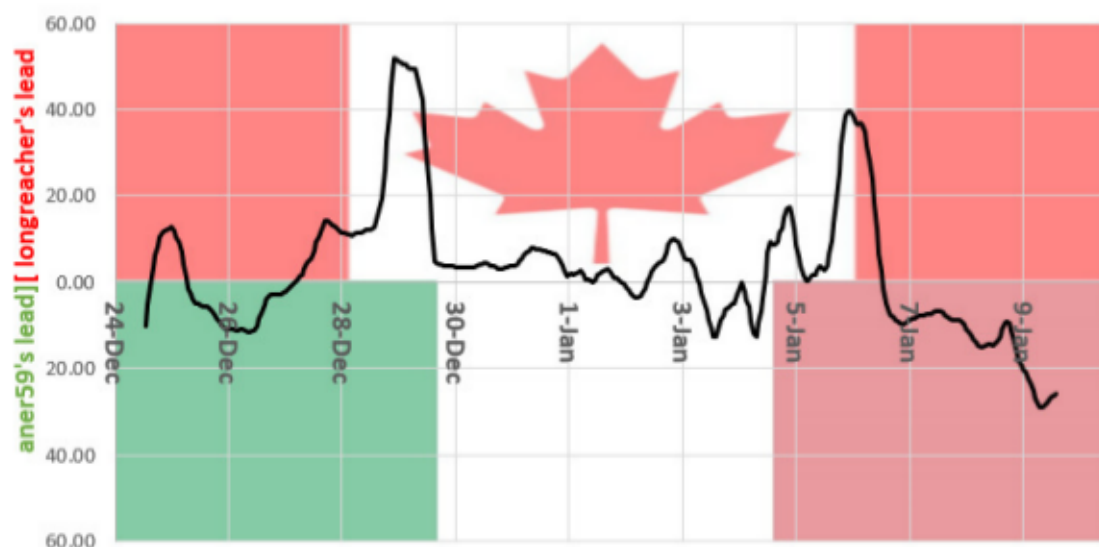
By the time we got to Malaysia, I was pretty confident that our group was going to be the first to Christmas. Now, if I could just maintain my lead. To my stern, I could see "TeamTurkey", "Saint_Lucia", "Franci", and off in the distance, a tiny Italian boat that I could just barely make out the name on... "aner59".

Two days later, the five of us were within shouting distance of one another, but then aner must have found a huge spinnaker somewhere, because she went past us like we were standing still. From there to the finish, the remaining four of us traded 2nd place back and forth as we tried unsuccessfully to close the gap to aner. In the end, I made a quick gybe east of Palau Panaitan and was able to secure a spot on the podium.



The dash for the podium

Head to Head: longreacher vs aner59



January 6th: aner turns on the jets!

Thanks to the SOL admin team, and to all the racers who made this an epic race.