

I've not been racing a lot lately, but this Saturday afternoon and evening I had some time on my hands. I spend the afternoon mostly observing how the sol team seemingly effortlessly managed to fix some last minute weather problems. Let us thank the sol team and in particular RainbowChaser for that we could sail in actual winds instead of a day old forecast. Unfortunately this meant we had to let go of the high resolution.

After this little episode, there was no way I would forget about the start time of this nice little race, and since I did not have anything else to do that evening, I decided to join in. I set my start command and checked the course and forecast. We would sail an almost straight line to North End and after that start an upwind leg to Cassard Point. I wasn't really sure what kind of shift there would be in the upwind leg. Before I got to North End however, I was called to dinner. The luxury of not having to cook for myself also meant I couldn't choose a time... I quickly set two DCs, the second one turning to maximum VMG after North End.

This turn at North End was an important one, if my DC would have fired one jump earlier, I would have beached and remain beached until I came back from dinner. If my DC would have fired one jump later, I would have lost about 3 places. When I got back from dinner, I saw my DC had fired at exactly the right time. Lou had chosen for an even quicker option and secured the lead. It was only now I saw that the upwind leg was hugely influenced by the right shift, I had been pointing too high for the last couple of minutes. I beared away a couple of degrees and sailed into the shift, optimal VMG to about 234^o, later 235^o when I guesstimated my tack need to be a little further to the north. So when the wind shifted beyond 235^o I tacked, and still found myself a little more south than I would like. I feared the boats north of me would pull ahead and I'd end up in 10th, which is not too bad actually.

Around this time I was pleasantly distracted by Musigny, who asked us to finish the sequence 2, 4, 8, 16, 56, 184, ... This distraction also meant I was a minute or two late turning to Cassard point, luckily I didn't lose too much ground though. I turned around Cassard point, with a bit of forced luck I came out pretty well and I could hope for a top 5 finish. Initially I thought there wasn't much going on in the downwind leg, almost no shift, no pressure difference. But this actually made the leg interesting. There was barely any performance loss, so a couple of extra gybes wouldn't cost you much. The tiny advantages for sticking to the shore became clear, slightly more pressure, but even more important: a tiny shift to the left.

The finish was even more exciting: the line was almost unbiased, and the shift to the right made it difficult to judge where to finish on the line. In addition, with the decreasing wind speed, the optimal VMG angle quickly shifted from roughly 164 to about 146, making it hard to judge laylines by hand. I was running behind and only figured out what would have been the best option after it was too late. I think karriv sailed the best lines in this last bit, choosing the correct side of the finish, and accounting for the changing VMG angle. Maybe if I did more sprints I would have recognised this and known what to do, I would have sailed roughly karriv's angle, and finished only 1 second behind karriv instead of 2.

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