

San Francisco to New York Ocean Race 2016

Race Report by NZL_Scotsman

The race may have taken over a month, but it was decided in a few days when the fleet was mired in light unstable winds off Rio. I threw away the routing strategy and did not try to predict the weather. I simply looked ahead and decided I would be better in the east, and as I was way behind the earlier leaders, the gamble was worth taking. Luck was on my side, as a window opened and I was able to escape ahead of the fleet. I was tempted to try further east, but was too attached to the fleet. Jepsom was further east and escaped with a couple of hours lead on me.

From there, the remaining 4,000nm or so was a tense match race. I gained an hour or so by keeping up and finding stronger wind at a better angle. When we came back together Jepsom had a slim 2nm lead. However from there, he sailed superbly: covering when needed, sailing faster the rest of the time. I threw in a couple of wobbles and jinks to break cover but no success. My last gybe may have been a little late when out of service in a remote corner of the country, but that made no difference to the result.

There was, of course, many thousands of miles before the mid-Atlantic. I was in touch with the leading pack after a slow start out of San Fran, in the big run due south. After trending south east in strong winds, I gave up on the coastal route when I thought the door would close. Outlaw and co kept going and the luck was with the brave as the door stayed open. They rounded the cape well ahead of the fleet and several hours of me. I was about 6 hours ahead of Jepsom at Cape Horn. The fleet gradually compressed heading north, but the leaders maintained a decent lead. However, that all changed when the blue wall stopped everyone.

Congratulations Jepsom. I'm delighted to be on the podium again.

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