

M2O prelude 2016 - race report – WINSTON_4

Writing a reasonably short and clear report about this race is more difficult than usual.

The facts of this race:

- Compared to SFO-NYC = one third of distance – two thirds of time to finish (slow boat)
- Quite stable WX if compared with other experiences
- The race can be split easily in three phases :
 1. Around the Eastern coast of Australia
 2. Where to get over the islands into the trades
 3. Long approach to Osaka.

The start was a good presentation of the endurance waiting for the fleet ahead: flickering and shifting breezes and need to spend all day tacking along the coast. What a start !!!!!

Soon enough thankfully the fleet managed to head offshore, and the rest of the coastal navigation was far more acceptable than expected: never needed to be at the helm for coastal dangers ;))

And then the Hamlet dilemma, with the only difference being that the Shakespearian character had two choicesThe SOL fleet had a dilemma of three folds:

1 - To the west, between New Britain and Papua into the Bismarck Sea, where some significant downwind opportunity was showing up at irregular intervals through the updates..... But there the real question was: "What after that ???? "

2 - In the middle, East or West of Bougainville. This seemed the least dangerous of the minefields (☺) BUT.....also the most affected by Blue Glue almost at every update.

3 – To the East, through the Salomon islands. This route was very promising in terms of TWS and BS, but had the disadvantage of being far much longer than the other two.

I must say that I have never considered the Western route. At the beginning of the approach to the Salomon Sea I did choose the Eastern fast run , also because I saw some of the SOL mavericks going there , and because my router was indicating that direction (only at times though) . Very soon I decided to veer to the center, and also decided to stick to my decision come hell or high water. When two days later I saw Viktor veering to the center and coming along with me, I knew I had done the right think. ;)))))))).

After Bougainville the leading pack soon tacked to the North West and from there it was matter of positioning and light shifts at every update. Apparently the only thing to be assessed yet was to see if the fast eastern pack could overtake the middle fleet before Osaka. After a few days this slowly became a clear NO.

One single event during the long approach to Osaka decided the TOP 10 rankings:

On Sunday the 24th, at about 600/700 miles from finish, Kipper was leading by about one hour, and I was keeping the Scotsman-rumskib-rafa-DIKKE group at reasonable distance, covering them when needed. The routing was planning a jibe to the west on port exactly on the 1630 update. Kipper gybed even earlier than that. I decided to wait and eventually act after the update. When the 1630 arrived it reduced and delayed strongly the right shift and compelled our group (Kipper-WIN-Dingo) to extend the starboard run by three hours. Simply this placed back the Scotsman-Rumskib-Rafa-DIKKE group even with the three of us. (15 minutes ahead or behind at each update).

The last three days have so been of one kind only: fight till the end!

In the end Kipper managed to preserve a well-deserved lead. He won the race in the second part, and fully deserved that effort not to be jeopardized in the last part. I managed to close the gap from Scotsman to under one minute, and to keep rum and the others behind, finishing in third on podium.

Conclusion: I have always said that Oceans can be like Gambling Casinos, where too many updates can create too many changes, and betray the best routers. This time I must admit that if one is able to DISREGARD (yes....disregard ;))) the router a few times during 4 weeks , can do perhaps better that just pumping the coin into the SLOT every six hours and blindly follow the result of the spinning wheel.

This is what I did and the way I felt after the finish line ;)

WIN