

Tanaga Kanaga PYOC Sprint 2016

Race Report by "zero"

Racing in the Aleutian Islands is always fun because I can day dream being on a place that likely I will never go. Unfortunately, since I like to travel.

I have to admit that the timing of this race gave me an advantage over my Europeans and Scandinavians competitors. The race started at 1PM and finished by 8PM on my time zone, and on a Saturday that I had nothing else to do. So, I was rested and sharp during the whole race. Still a Finn managed to win the race. "Smo" who really shined on this one, I know that it was very late for him and he were probably very tired, still he won.

Before the start we all needed to decide on either take the North or the South route. To me and to most, the North was a no brainer since it had more wind pressure and better angle. Still, the South was the way to go during the practice days and probably misled the few sailors that set a DC to start well in advance.

We started straight up to the west most side of the Tanaga Island and VMG to the next turn. Here it got a bit tricky, since the wind pressure was strengthening and the VMG angle was changing, so it required constant adjustments. The first big decision was where to tack to lay to the next bent on the coast. I made a calculation mistake and tacked slightly too early and had to pinch may way to the next bend. Looking back on the other sailors tracks, I see that the winner "Smo" tacked later than me. To my surprise, I did not lose much by pinching and in fact after the next bend I was side by side with the leaders.

Then it was a long straight line to the north coast of Kanaga Island. About 4 to 5 hours reaching. In that leg the options were either bear away slightly for more speed but with a longer route (follow a TWA route), or tight the sheets and point a bit higher to be able to catch more pressure and bear away faster to the next turn. Difficult choice when you know that these sprint races a few seconds can cost you a dozen places on the leaderboard.

My gut told me to follow TWA for more speed at the beginning of the leg and point higher at the end. I did that for about an hour. Then I decided to look up what the competition where doing. To my surprise I was the south most boat between the leaders. It was clear to me that they were all chasing more wind pressure. I them remembered one of the cardinal rules of sailing "... always cover...". I started ever so slightly tightening the sheets and pointing higher to avoid a large separation between the leading group.

After the turn at the north of the island, it was all downwind to the finish line with only one gybe. This time I delayed my gibe a bit in hopes that I would had more speed to win, but it wasn't possible. "zero" crossed the line in second; ahead of some top-notch sailors which is always nice!!! 😊😊😊

As always, my sincere thanks to all the volunteers on this wonderful place. Sailonline.org.

Antonio "zero"