

### Traverse City Traverse 2016

When the flag went down and the cannon roared for the start of Traverse City Traverse Wolff remained glued to the line for awhile – somewhat to my bewilderment. Perhaps there is a technical explanation for this!

Well, leaving the start area as almost the last boat, there were battles to be won. I kept an eye peeled for my two Danish competitors, Mouthansar and Bimmer. They were the ones I wanted to beat.

Side by side with Mouthansar. That felt OK. Bimmer was slightly behind, which was hard to believe with the start Wolff had. Bimmer sailed on varying courses – somewhat confused it seemed. Seasickness set in early perhaps. At least that's how I felt looking at it.

On course in 65th position and my course set for Little Traverse Bay and Mark 1, Wolff rounded 30th and I was quite pleased although a fleet of boats continued North when we went East for the mark.

Traverse Bay to High Island was beating against the wind. The flotilla split into two groups where some sailed West and others North. Wolff went North in fine, stable winds, tacked and saw TWA increase on the way West peaking at about TWA 100 towards High Island. This paid off and Wolff was placed 3<sup>rd</sup>. The boats starting out towards the West were beating all the way to High Island and lost a little in the process.

After the mark the course was set for the point South of Big Bay de Noc. A two and a half hour cruise, so I set the alarm. At the point Wolff was still 3<sup>rd</sup> with two companions, BMD and Lunch, who unfortunately didn't hear their alarms and continued in a straight line. Now, it was just Rumskib and Zero up ahead, when we rounded. On the beat towards Mark 3, Wolff somehow succeeded in passing Zero and rounded the mark in second place.

The leg towards Washington Island didn't offer much opportunity, yet somehow Zero managed to pass me. He went a little deeper on the reach and gybed earlier than Wolff and passed me.

When we rounded Manitou Island, Zero overshot the land-trap. Wolff took the inside and regained 2<sup>nd</sup> place. Mouthansar was up to 4<sup>th</sup> and breathing down our necks.

Next was a beat towards South Fox Island. Next mark after that was Hog Island and the big question here was whether to pass the big island South West of Hog Island to the West or to the East. I chose to steer Wolff West of the island to obtain a favorable TWA from the North point of the island and over to Hog Island. Going East of the island would mean beating all the way in receding TWS

Rumskib, Zero and Wolff all chose the West side of the island. The first boat to go North was Zero parking him at a TWA around 42 degrees. Wolff holds off the turn and ends up at TWA 45, more speed meant leaving Zero behind in 3<sup>rd</sup>., while Rumskib waits, gets an even better TWA and sails past Wolff. All I could do was wave and smile while he confidently overtook me. Not much fun. At the North of the island Wolff touched TWA 74 and almost 15 Kn.

Rounding Hog Island in 2<sup>nd</sup> position and looking back at Mouthansar, it was clear that the Westerly route round the island had paid off. Mouthansar, who chose the East side, had had to fall back by about two miles but remained in 4th. at Hog Island.

From Hog Island it was about 60 Nm to the finish line sailing at Max. TWA most of the way. In such conditions it would be hard to attack Rumskib without opening a flank for Zero, so pretty much all I could do was go straight for the finish line.

The three first boats in this race crossed the finish line within 2 min 33 sec of each other after a 300Nm. A very close and very exciting race on an excellent course layout.

Wolff, June 2016.