

From Auckland ...to Auckland.

These NZ waters are so good for sailing.

Probably because, as they are in the antipodes, they have common things to my own country - strong winds and weather stability - miles away from the tricky Med light winds or the Brazilian Coast to where everybody is now bound in the SOL RTW race A make a especial mention to the area comprehended between Cabo Frio and Florianópolis, a real "wind hole" that always brings bad memories to me.

The next Olympics Sailing events will be held in August, inside the beautiful *Baía de Guanabara*, *Rio de Janeiro* (#4 inner regatta fields and #3 in front of the bay).

I foresee tons of solar protector and long races for the competitors.
Gold'n'tan for the winners!



Picture courtesy of <https://www.riodejaneiro.com/v/geography/>

The *SSANZ Safety at Sea Two-Handed Triple Series 2016 - Race 1* was already a SOL classic buddy race. To *SRC* and the *Sailing Association of New Zealand* my compliments and full appreciation.

Before the gun the weather changed in a couple of days to a strong and steady SE wind that even today (Sunday) is still blowing, basically giving the skippers two upwind approaches, one from Auckland Starting Line (SL) to Gannet Rock and the second on the way back from Shearer Rock Buoy to Motutapu Island (East coast) and two downwind legs, the first from Gannet to Shearer and the last leg from Motutapu to the entrance of the Finish Line in front of the Okahu bay.

Leaving the SL at 21:00 hrs UTC we had the option to sail a little North for more WP or, a straight course with less miles (it was/is marginal) to the NE tip of Whaiheke Island, to tighten the sheets later for a close reach to the first rounding in Gannet.

The majority of the field went N of the first rhumb line, probably following the top skippers, something that, again, I didn't.

Anyhow, the big tactical decision was to be taken in the next downwind leg - between Gannet and Shearer - as the right option was to leave the mark to North in direction to better WP. Half of the fleet (aprox.) went back to gybe latter near Otata island but, with less WP, while the rest of the fleet were already at full speed with a little help from a slightly wind shear to the third mark. Rounding Shearer in the front was important has the next leg an upwind one didn't offered many options to be sailed.

In this leg I've opted for a slight pinch to East for getting a better marginal WP.

Lots of activities behind as the other top boats were already covering the last half of this leg "pumping" the "TWA curve".

The final leg after Motutapu was sailed geometrically with three simple straight lines, closer to the North regatta field as possible to reach a higher BS (I suppose) and shooting the top N of the FL.

That wasn't necessarily the correct option as the others boats were going tighter for the FL while taking a short path.

Mind you that this race was made with a *Samsung* Android phone and without any use of the *hmm's* SOL boats live data, something that, unfortunately has been consolidating in SOL skippers.

That's another chapter to be told one of these days.

A final word to *Zoe*, *longreacher* (two seconds behind!!!) podium neighbors and *Trampantojo*, that could well finish this race, at least, in my position if he didn't made a mistake with the FL at sight.

Trampantojo has been sailing everyday better, my congratulations to him also.

Thank you all and *SRC* for another epic race series.
Over & Out.

João
psail