

Sail Around Turkey

The first time I did this race I think it was the inaugural race in 2010 and I finished #9 and I remember clearly making comments that this one was a classic and had everything that a SOL enthusiast needs and for that reason suggested to admin at the time that we need to do this race annually.

- *At the start a difficult inland sea with swirling and unpredictable weather in the 550 nm Black Sea leg.*
- *Follow this up with a narrow channel, the Bosphorus Strait, into the Sea of Marmara with another unpredictable swirling wind and finish that off with the second narrow channel the Dardanelles.*
- *Then we have a section of “round the islands” with an added challenge of SLI’s between Samos and Tekir waypoints.*
- *Finally we have, as history of the race will show, the last 470 nm of relative open sea but with the needed aspect of covering your position over the last 4 sections of ocean type sailing.*
- *And during this entire race there is definitely going to be some or other midnight challenge to tackle as the timing is never quite suitable!*

6 to 7 days of gruelling sailing over 1369 nautical miles that for some weird reason appeals to the sadist in me and I keep coming back for more;

2010 – #9 -The first race

2011 – DNF – I was in Zimbabwe and the poor network wouldn’t allow me to compete. I managed to start but gave up with bad network availability.

2012 – DNS - I was still in Zimbabwe and the poor network wouldn’t allow me to compete

2013 – DNS - I cannot remember why I didn’t start this year.

2014 – DNF – I was lying 4th when I panicked driving in to work and set a bad set of DC’s and dropped to 20th by the time I was in the office – I made the call to go twa=0, how f@#\$%g “Defeatist”!! I was grumpy for a week!

2015 - #11

2016 - #3

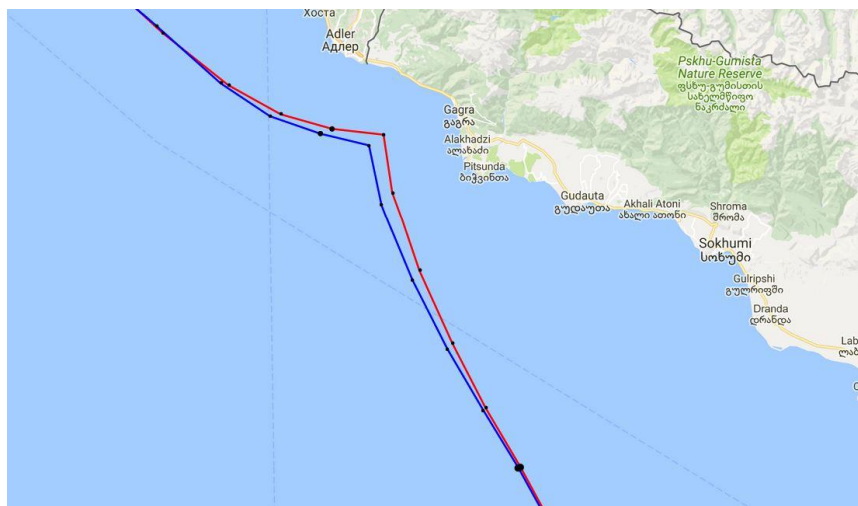
The 2016 Race

At the start I knew that the best option was to sail northeast and this was confirmed by the routing I use.

Fortunately, what I refer to as ‘The Pack’ also thought so and off we went. My goal was a top 20 finish as a minimum.

The first night I thought everything was going to be stable and I set a dc based on the routing plan and slept through.

This proved to be a mistake of sorts as I lost about 1 nm to ‘The Pack’ and already was behind the 8 ball as they say, sailing in less favourable wind and lost even more ground.

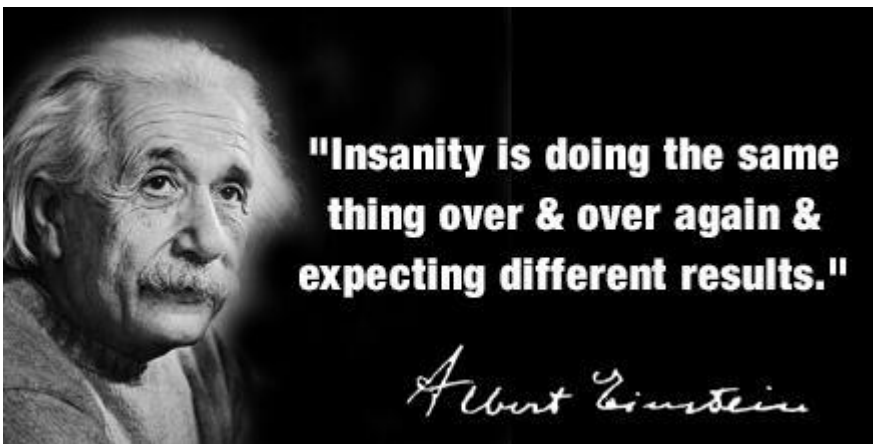


The second night, I did the same, with the same result!? This time increasing my loss to around 6 nm and even worse off.

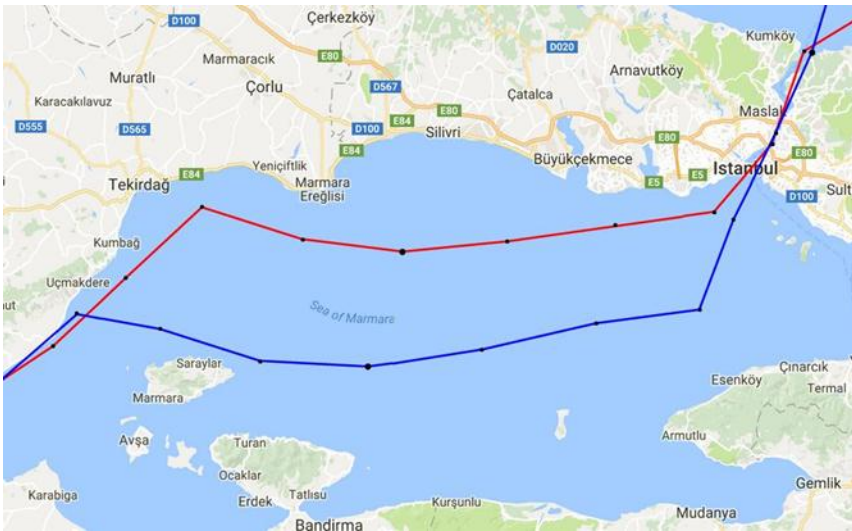


They say "Make one mistake and learn, make the same mistake a second time and repeat the learning, make the same mistake for the third and prove you are a fool"

They also say this!

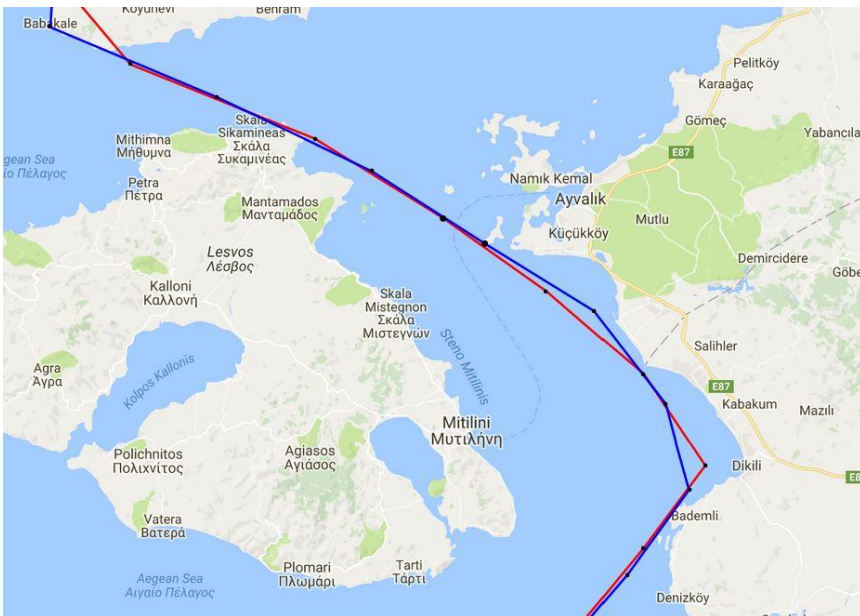


There I was, having to play catch up and I slept through for the 3rd night in a row and by the time I got to the Bosphorus I was 8.5 nm behind kenza. **Damn fool!** In SOL you have to pay attention and in my case even more so as I use routing yes but still am at heart a SOTP sailor!! Yet I was now in position #10! and I knew from experience that the next 2 days and nights are the most challenging and there are always casualties and as a result I decided to now start getting serious at midnight and solidify my position. I sailed a different line to 'The pack' in the sea of Marmara which was forced on me by being 5 nm behind at the exit of Bosphorus having made up 3 nm because The Pack had hit low wind and I had to sail north to maintain boat speed.

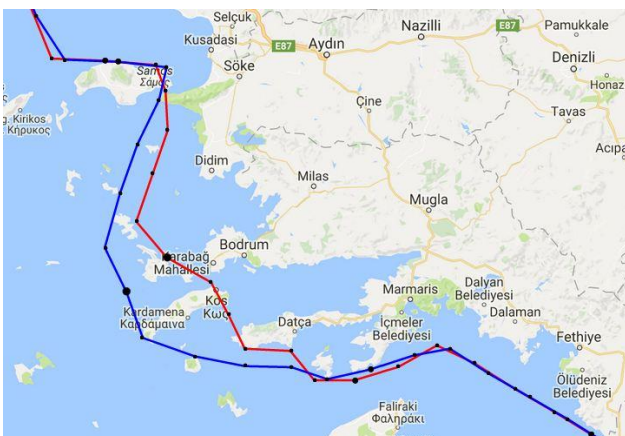


Coming out of the Dardanelles I was lying #6 and still 5 nm behind kenza.

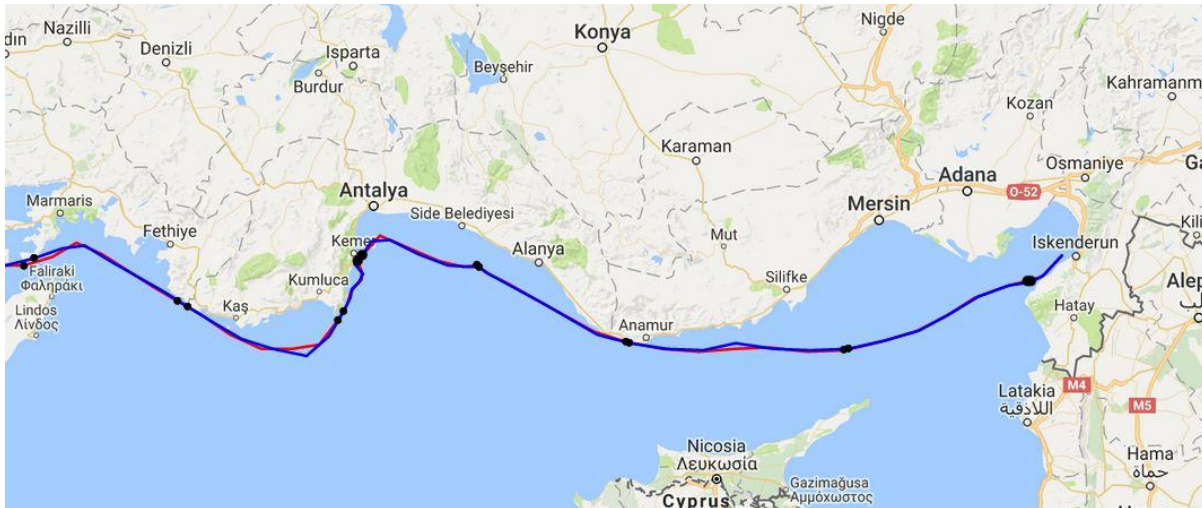
After the waypoint at Babakale I sailed deep towards Bademli and this proved to be a big bonus as I had overtaken 2 more, rafa being one I think the other was rumskib and was lying #4 and was 1.5 nm behind kenza mainly as a result of him picking up the low winds and me catching up with stronger.



The next section I decided to gamble on sailing the normal line to the waypoint at Tekir and after rounding was lying #3 having put the 'Fear of God' in the leaders I think, in that I very nearly pulled off a major jump on them. Through the night I was lying #1 for 6 hours. I was however a little in a worse position after Tekir regarding wind and angle and I found myself now 4 nm behind having lost 3 on my route and despite this knew that **this was it!** Stay focussed, cover the chasers and the 3 position was mine.



There was one last curve ball thrown our way however right at the finish and in the bay at Iskenderun, the wind dropped alarmingly and swung around requiring a huge effort to maintain boat speed and get the job done.



Over the last three nights I just had to cover the chasers and I got in maybe 9 catnaps of a maximum of an hour and a half each! My speech was slurred and I couldn't focus properly nor could I concentrate for too long, my wife was looking at me with "That Look", you know what I mean guys?

This result is a sweet one indeed and I will forever hold this race in high regard.

George Out!! – Jawz – August 2016