

Chile Islands RTI Sprint 2016

Race Report by "Zoe"

Another sprint race, my favorite mode of SAILonline races, this time zig-zagging around a few islands in Chile. Chile is a beautiful country in the west coast of South America not very big in territorial area, but the country has "... one of the world's longest and most dangerous coastlines; it is more than 2500 miles long and has at least 5000 rocky islands....", according to Wikipedia.

We sailed mostly in light winds; the race started with under 1 kts of TWS; got to almost 3 kts half way and we finished with about 2.5 kts. Luckily we used our trusted Class 40 that has a powerful sail area and light weight displacement, so the boat is fast. I had the pleasure to sail and race on a Class 40 in real life a few times and every time I came home with a smile on my face.



My hand after trimming the A2 for six hours without gloves on a Class-40; kids don't follow my example; it is painful.

Anyway,

As I said, this was a sprint race, which means not room for errors. I made a few. LOL. Just after the starting gun the wind slowly started to shift west; which meant a long run North as fast as possible and wait to gybe as close as possible to the coast. My mistake number 1; I switched the +/- sign and sent the wrong command forcing a premature Gybe; I immediately gybed back. This happened twice on this very first run of the race. Luckily there is no performance loss in light winds. In fact, this was a race that the performance loss was not an issue whatsoever. We could gybe, tack, do whatever without regard to the loss of performance. At one point when the wind picked up a bit, we got some performance loss but nothing that would make a difference in the leaderboard. Except of course if you hit the coast; them it hit you with an 80% loss. More of this later. LOL.

The wind direction constantly oscillated during the whole race; beginning blowing from East, slowly shifting to South and then back to South-East at the finish line. Because of the constant wind direction shift this race was a test for who could zig-zag closest to the coast line; without hitting by an 80% loss. Any extended tack would definitely cost you places when you tacked back.

And so the zig-zag dance started and I saw myself battling with "bonknhoot", "WINSTON_4", "aner59", "harvestmoon" and others. It was beautiful to see and be part of this choreographed dance.

My mistake #3 happened when I overextended the very last tack right before we reached the "Isla Matilde" mark. Dammit, I knew that any delay in tacking would cause a damage in the leaderboard. So, my 30 secs delay in tacking took "Zoe" from a clean first place to fifth place. Yes, my competitors were extremely good sailors and merciless in taking any advantage of someone else silly mistake.

My leg up to "Isla Marta", down wind thru a narrow channel was perfect; lots of gybes; no over-extension and a hell of a concentration from the skipper; rounding the mark I could feel a spot in the podium again; although there was no time for complacency because "aner59" was salivating at an arm's length from my transom.

And the race went on like that, extremely concentration from everyone and no time to do anything away from the computer. The final leg up to the turn to the finish line was another example of impressive zig-zag skirting the rocks. I counted 28 gybes by "Zoe". Remember that performance loss wasn't a factor in this race due to the light winds.

My Mistake #4:

It had to happen; with so many gybes; late at night mind you; "Zoe" and her trusted skipper scratched the rocks; it wasn't quite a crash since the boat never completely stopped but it was just enough to take an 80% penalty. This one hurt. I won't say it cost me places, because we all make mistakes and I won't be surprised if the leaders didn't have their share of misadventures as well. So, as is always the case in SAILonline, the winner is the one who makes the least number of mistakes; and because of that I could not deserve to win. As much as I wanted.

Because I had to wait for the performance loss to go back to 100% before tacking; I extended the last leg of the zig-zag. Interesting, I noticed that "WINSTON_4" was also over extending the leg. Evidently I didn't not know his reasoning but I had to assume that he did not hit the rock and perhaps wanted to catch the stronger winds North of us. At the same time "bonknhoot" and "aner59" kept with the gybing close to the coast. So, all of a sudden, there was a noticeable separation of the leaders. Albeit for different reasons "Zoe" kept going North.

I am not positive, but I think, me hitting the rock cost me the podium, but by going North at the very end, I recouped the podium; and I know that if I hadn't hit I would be gybing again instead of going North. So, it is possible that "aner59" is now sad that he did an extra gybe that cost him a place in the podium.

It goes to show you how tight and unforgiving these sprints are.

After we all completed our final gybe and finally pointed the boats to the finish line; who was ahead? "WINSTON_4" took the leading position after that overextend run North. My hat goes out to him. That was a fantastic move; similar to a chess grandmaster giving a checkmate when you least expected.

"bonknhoot" crossed second a whopping 7 seconds later; them "Zoe" 10 seconds after "bonknhoot"; them "aner59" and "harvestmoon". Congrats to these mad men. LOL.

As always, my sincere thanks to all the volunteers that make all this happen.

Antonio "Zoe"

P.S.:

Zoe is second-in-command onboard *Serenity*, a loyal wartime friend of Captain Reynolds, and the wife of Wash. Her surname during the Unification War was Alleyne. She was born and raised on a ship and served under Mal during the war as a corporal. Described by her husband as a "warrior woman", she is a capable fighter who keeps calm even in the most dangerous situations. She demonstrates an almost unconditional loyalty to Mal, the only exception noted being her marriage to Wash, which the captain claims was against his orders.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=64r2LD_uxil

[Serenity \(2005\)](#)

[Capt. Malcolm Reynolds:](#) I'll take the shuttle in closer. Zoe, ship is yours. Remember, if anything happens to me, or you don't hear from me within the hour... you take this ship and you come and you rescue me.

[Zoë:](#) What? And risk my ship?

[Capt. Malcolm Reynolds:](#) I mean it. It's cold out there. I don't wanna get left.