

This was an unexpected and definitely lucky win. I do not really like the long coastal type of races, and in fact this very course once earned me a rare DNF. I do enjoy the individual legs, but the many roundings make it an attrition game, and I tend to be on the wrong side of that. Even so I like to check out these courses for a quick brain exercise. I estimated that Cowes would be rounded around midnight, which was somewhat promising. I continued until Fastnet, and all roundings looked reasonable. In the prestart I consulted the router for accurate estimates. This confirmed it, I would give it a try!

On the approach to the first mark at St Marcouf I realized that I could afford an early tack to set up an easy rounding. That gave me a one minute lead. Practice race experience paying off, very nice.

Next was a quick trip across the chanel and around Isle of Wight. My plan was to switch to DCs after Cowes. I reached Cowes a bit later than planned around 2300, then took entirely too long with my DCs and failed to fall asleep right away. In the end I stayed up until the exit of the Solent around 2am outlaw time.

The next leg to Lizard Point turned out decisive. The fleet had to negotiate a front. My approach was good, however rafa had a better a line and probably should have won. Unfortunately he got stalled in the shift and lost a lot of time. At Lizard Point I was leading Alexandria and a strung out fleet by five minutes.

The Ker 40 was allowed to show its speed on the next two legs around Tuscar and Fastnet Rock. A fun boat, with performance similar to the TP52 or Steinlager, certainly a succesful rollout. As speed went up the gaps went down a little, under 3 minutes before Fastnet. Alexandria took too much risk on the Fastnet rounding and gave me a bit more time.

The return trip was all upwind and broken up in a few short legs, including a second rounding of Lizard Point. That made it easy to control the race. On top of that it was a bit of a rich get richer situation.

Overall I got very lucky that all roundings happened at times when I'm normally awake. Most of the top ten had problems and allowed me to run away. And three podium candidates managed to blow it on the final day. Either way it feels good to claim a win and avenge my DNF. Congrats to Alexandria and rafa for the podium, as well as all finishers!

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