

I almost failed to write a report about this race. I am not a great story-teller. However, there are some thoughts I would like to share.

Attention to the polar diagram is very important -- I can say one or two words about it, as I made a serious mistake during the Round the White Island race by using the wrong polar in my my calculations for most of the race... But it was even more important here, because, as the author of the Particulars sheet

(http://sailonline.org/static/var/sphene/sphwiki/attachment/2016/09/21/Mini_6.50_Particulars.pdf) wisely noted, this boat "has an unusually strong upwind as well as deep downwind performance, making it a tricky little tiger to tame online".

In practice, this means three things: (a) in upwind conditions, it might be possible to sail some degrees away from the wind with only small losses in VMG; (b) in downwind conditions, it could happen that the best solution is to broad reach rather than running, especially if the TWS is between 12 and 20 knots; and (c) watch out for the humps!

This was not so important during the early stages of the race, when I was trying to jockey for position amid the light, shifty airs. Here, I have to say I did not expect to be the first to get more breeze, barely ahead of rafa.

The rounding of Key West was pretty straightforward, but the way to the finish was set to be much trickier, as Dingo was keen to demonstrate. He reminded me of an important practice: do at least one routing as if there were no land masses. When I did, I realized what was really going on, and tacked north. In the end, I managed to cling to a minimal advantage over the Aussie, phew!

Lesson taken, I proceeded to the western tip of the Vaca Key, keeping the chasing boats to the leeward. At this junction, I had a decision to make: when to tack east.

Routers have limitations. As bonkhoot aptly said during the race, there are spots they are unable to detect. I would tend to think that some of them go unnoticed because their "time width" is smaller than the router time step. One possible way to deal with this situation is... yes, you got it: route as if the world were all water and use your grey cells (thanks, kroppyer). In this case, it showed that going as much as north as possible was the best choice. As the last way out to east was the channel between Upper Matecumbe and Windley, I selected my target there and planned my passage to get there.

In my opinion, one of the reasons that explain the success of the north option is the fascinating upwind sector of the polar diagram. This helped the northern guys (me, Dingo, bonkhoot...) pick up speed while still keeping very good speed to windward -- and safely come ahead of the southern group (aner, Franci...).

After tacking to the finish line, I fell asleep. I was fortunate to wake up two or three minutes before arrival, if only to realize that my planning had been correct and successful in defending first place.

And I went back to sleep.

I would like to thank all the skippers that congratulated me for this victory and apologize for not replying to them in time.

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