

Well, that was a lot of fun packed into a brief few, if, for Europeans, slightly ungodly hours, and, with a turnout of more than 100, our little community is catching on: ice yachting is exciting, on-line or real-life. Blasting through hires bendy winds at speeds averaging well above 30kn requires frequent course adjustments in order to find the absolute best pressure and angle from mark-to-mark. A DC series, although theoretically easier to determine with PL off, simply won't do well enough.

What about bonk's race then. Plenty of incident. I'll try and be quick.

A straight line to the first turn at the NE corner of Arluq Island was what most people went for, but this was at a TWA deeper (by 2° or 3°) than optimum. No PL, so I started off on starboard gybe with a DC set to fire 11 secs after the start. Worked, but alas, one server jump took me to 3° above the lay, and bonkie got to the corner mid fleet.

Fortunately, a first opportunity to regain some places soon presented itself when the course took us upwind from Big Hips Island to a mark off the mouth of the Akutuak River. I short tacked in under Big Hips and then gybed off right on a lift that would head as the layline was reached. I probably went right a bit too early, nevertheless at the mark, bonk was back in the game. Trampantojo at this stage was doing very well.

But then I made another mistake, executing a complicated gybe onto a run and then a harden-up to minimise PL, when of course earlier I had been basing my tactics on no PL!

A long broad reach (you don't notice the difference much in an ice yacht; you stay sheeted in) now followed with further opportunities for catching up. I bore well down off the rhumb line to the southern shore of Christopher Island in order to get into the centre of the lake for more pressure, and after thirty minutes or so started turning left little by little, to ultimately approach the island from above the layline (again hunting for pressure).

Rounding the eastern extremity of Christopher went well and bonk went into p1 with Lou hot on my heels. The next corner went less swimmingly and Lou took over.

I have this quaint habit of rounding by DC. I set a DC and as I approach a mark I update the ETA constantly. I decided I wanted to go hard on port coming away from the Keyek River mark, so I set up 42° TWA. Should have been "minus" 42°. I was surprised how severe my turn was before I realised what I had done. Oh, oh!

Enfin, it got me into the middle of the lake a bit quicker than I had planned or needed, but once there I held my high-on-the-wind course to again enjoy more pressure; then dipped North a bit as we sailed through the lee of Big Hips and came back up again. Ducking and weaving, I very nearly caught Lou back and just pipped WINSTON. I was well chuffed.