

A3 2016 - Leg 5 - Brisbane to Hamilton Island

Cold winter winds and snow are blowing here in Canada, with wind chills of -30°C expected for the end of the week, so it is good to have the opportunity to escape, albeit virtually, to the sunny shores of Eastern Australia.

Day one of this two day affair started really well. A fortuitous start time meant I was able to get around the first two marks before heading off to bed, leaving my little boat to make the trek around Fraser Island. I also benefited a bit from the switch last month to standard time, which meant that I was able to make that one last check of the weather before heading to bed to catch the 0430 update. The next morning, I was in good shape, and a couple of efficient roundings had **PetrM, rafa** and me swapping the lead back and forth for much of the day.

On Day 2, the Keppel Bay mark sorted out the podium. I went long. Not much, but enough to



Gotta keep a watch for those little coral cays!

give PetrM a bit of breathing space. More disastrously, rafa went short and had to backtrack. I gave chase to PetrM, but had to sail a bit more conservatively through the cays of the Great Barrier Reef, hoping as I slept, that my little boat would safely avoid them. The rest of day 2 was spent chasing PetrM, but he sailed brilliantly, and I was never able to close the gap. I was happy to see that rafa recovered from the bad rounding to join us on the podium.

Thanks once again to the SOL team for putting this race together.

-longreacher
December 13th, 2016