

XMAS to XMAS 2016

Three very distinct routes were available for this race. The choice among the three routes had to be made almost from the very beginning, and then stick to it. And the 7 day weather forecast was almost meaningless for such a long race. So the decision had to be mostly intuitive.

One option was to sail northwest towards the Philippines and then a difficult course down south. The first part going westward looked promising, but the second part going south was complex, would require lots of attention, and not very good chances of having fair winds in that segment.

A second option going south of Australia was very tempting; open waters and more possibilities of having stronger winds, but quite a longer distance.

The third option was going as straight as possible passing just north of Australia. No spectacular chances for good winds, but it was the shortest distance. I chose this one and very fortunately it happened to be the right choice.

But it became the best choice only on the last 2 days when the winds near the finish became very favorable for us lucky ones coming from the west. This could have been very different.

Anyway it is remarkable that after such a long race, the 3 routes resulted to be almost equivalent, so it was not only a matter of choosing the best route, but within each route, it was important to steer as fast and efficiently as possible all through the three weeks the race lasted.

It turned to be an interesting race with a close and exciting finish.

Thanks to the SOL team for providing this thrilling race and congrats to the podium and to the top finishers in each of the 3 routes.

Happy New Year with lots of sailing, SOL and real, for All in 2017.

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