

Cape Town to Rio 2017

The 2th of January, still recovering from all festivities, and being alone at home, with a week of holidays in front, and not really having big programs, I decided to take the start in this Atlantic crossing, without any big expectations.

Didn't make a great start and lost instantly a few miles, but finding a bit more pressure north allowed me to get back with the race leaders. From the start the fleet broke in three groups, south for the more adventurous like Sassy, Jaws and Smo, the center for the undecided, and North for trade wind lovers like myself. A choice made by most of what I consider the best SOL ocean sailors. The other nice thing about taking the northern route was that there was only one weather system.

Sailing through only one weather system was a great advantage for a non router, in races where you sail through different weather systems I can place my boat in a good position but then completely go wrong entering the second weather system. My plan was to stay in a position with a possibility to turn south to the center of the field, where once and while a door was opening, but we were a bit too slow to reach it before closing. But sooner or later we would have to go there.

Not being considered an ocean racer gave me the chance to escape at the right moment from Rafa (who was then race leader) and who was controlling the complete fleet, where I dipped as first one south, inside of the curve with less pressure but much better angles. I started with a gibe, an hour before the weather update, and then giped back, hoping that the update would be gentle for my choice, and I did this 3 consecutive updates, at the end this worked like planned, and I found myself with a nice lead, over a select group of followers.

Then entering the last 100 nm, during which I also had to catch a flight to Brussels, with a lead of 10 nm over Sassy and Jaws and 25 nm over Ricotina, Rafa and Franci, in normal circumstances that shouldn't be a big problem, but with a giant wind hole in front that turned out different, it was the only night I stayed awake for most of the night, with decreasing and turning winds and land ends and islands on the racecourse, and the top of the fleet closing the enormous gap, I had, down. But luckily I managed to pass the finish line in first place with a small margin on Ricotina.

During the whole race it seems there were technical problems with grib files and data center not working, and tools of all types, I don't know if that gave an advantage to me not needing them, anyway I hope that one day we will race all with the same tools so we can really know who is the best, I find that all tools should be integrated in the client, and that others should be banned.

Last little thing, I used 4 dc's to complete the whole race, I'm curious how many you all had, so winning this race for me was only through my dedication, and like my good friend Piero, the old and pensioned Soler, always says, "tenere duro".

Ciao to all,
Lou/Lode

Ps, written on the flight back to Italy RC will be happy.