

I started this race with the intention of always sleeping through the Australian night and hence skipping the 16:30 WX (2:30am Aus time). Indeed, I also intended to enjoy my normal 8 hour sleep and not even wake up at some ungodly hour around sunrise to try to limit the damage of a missed WX.

For long range routing the 04:30 and 16:30 WXs are reliable because they are based on a much more comprehensive database than the other two. So sure enough, within 24 hours of starting and missing a vital 16:30 WX wind shift, I found myself an hour behind the lead bunch heading down to Africa and the Azores.

My long range routing meanwhile was suggesting a route post the Azores which passed to the north of the Atlantic High, rather than the normal southerly route. There was a big gamble but staying south of the high would leave me always following the leaders and with a following breeze, little options to pass.

As it turned out sailing upwind and juggling angle and pressure did give opportunities to move myself into a reasonable position relative to the other 'northerners' but the vagaries of the frustrating Bermuda high meant we never really knew where we were relative to the southern fleet.

As we got to within a few days of Bermuda my position was quite good, and when Dikke had to travel, he gifted me a rise of one spot to defend against both the Italian armada around me and the southern fleet. Unfortunately it also meant that I'd better get up at 2:30am for a few days, to honour his gift, and to defend the position.

For once, good luck intervened and the WXs stayed consistently in favour of the northern fleet for long enough to get me to the line.

Dingo /May 2017