

## 2017 40' Series Championship Q3&Q4 Naples Triangle

The first race of another really competitive 6 race 40-footer series.

Wind speeds over the course were on the low side of 10 kn and plenty of 3-5kn.

To help choose a boat I decided to simulate each of the boats over the race course at race time using the Wx issued about 12 hours before. The Class 40 was quickest but surprisingly the SOTO was only about 30 min slower, (the KER 150 min slower).

Having learnt the limitations of the SOTO in the earlier series common-sense told me that I should choose the SOTO, after all, how often would you expect the SOTO to be so competitive? And the SOTO choice would give you more KER/Class 40 options for later races. Despite that thinking, I chose the Class 40.

(Actually the first SOTOs' were only 10 mins behind and the first KERs', Zoe and midnightexpress 90 and 160 min behind. psail commented in chat after the race that, for the series strategy the SOTO was the right choice. I agree and wish those SOTO skippers the best in the series.)

The first leg to Ustica was uneventful and from memory the Class 40 and SOTO were well mixed in the top dozen boats and Billy maybe 9<sup>th</sup> after an early morning SOTP rounding.

The leg to Stromboli was about 20 hrs to windward of which about 5hrs were tacking close hauled. This was early afternoon my time so I decided to do it more or less SOTP by setting 4 or 5 DC's at a time for the 16 tacks. I did not want to tack too often nor did I want to get outside of the lane where wind speed was a little better so I chose 20 min tacks, referred to the boat polar for max VMG and sailed TWA to suit the wind speeds which varied around 5-6 knots. This worked very well because when I turned on the final tack towards Stromboli the leading bunch had become more strung out and I think I was top 3 in very close company with Franci and rumskib and maybe Neuroman - I can't remember if he still led at the time.

The last leg to the western end of the finish line was again generally uneventful but I held good position. Franci gybed for the line first which left him with a slower angle, I gybed to a faster angle and caught him, rumskib gybed to a slightly faster angle but Billy had enough small lead to get to the line first by 20 secs.

All in all, I am really happy with the way I sailed this race, maybe my best. I had no other commitments and was able to put a lot of time into it. Made good preparation with the boat simulations, routed to good positions, payed close attention to Wx updates, made no bad mistakes, rounded marks efficiently and did an excellent job to windward on the Stromboli leg.

This race was highly competitive as always, Neuroman had a great lead for the first leg and I gather, sadly, that he got busy outside SOL. longreacher was a strong threat which waned towards the finish.

Thanks to all the starters for such a competitive race and to the SOL Team for their generous commitment. I look forward to the rest of this fantastic 40' Series.

Billy 24/4/2017