

Rendezvous 2017 - Tall Ships Regatta - Halifax to Le Havre

Renegade – August 2017

Summary:

WOW! My first podium and it's a victory of 3 min 37 sec. This race was amazing and totally unexpected considering the competition and how challenging and unpredictable ocean racing is. Thank you to SOL and the administrators and all those who keep this environment running. Thanks to the race designer, and race committee.

Pre-Race thinking:

I had not expected to do well in this race, beyond my average "decent" performances. There were several factors for this right from the start. I would have several IRL all-day events during this timeframe where I would not be available to do any checking. Of course, those would typically occur during critical moments in the race. Lucky for me disaster was averted in both scenarios.

The race: (For an alternate explanation see below)

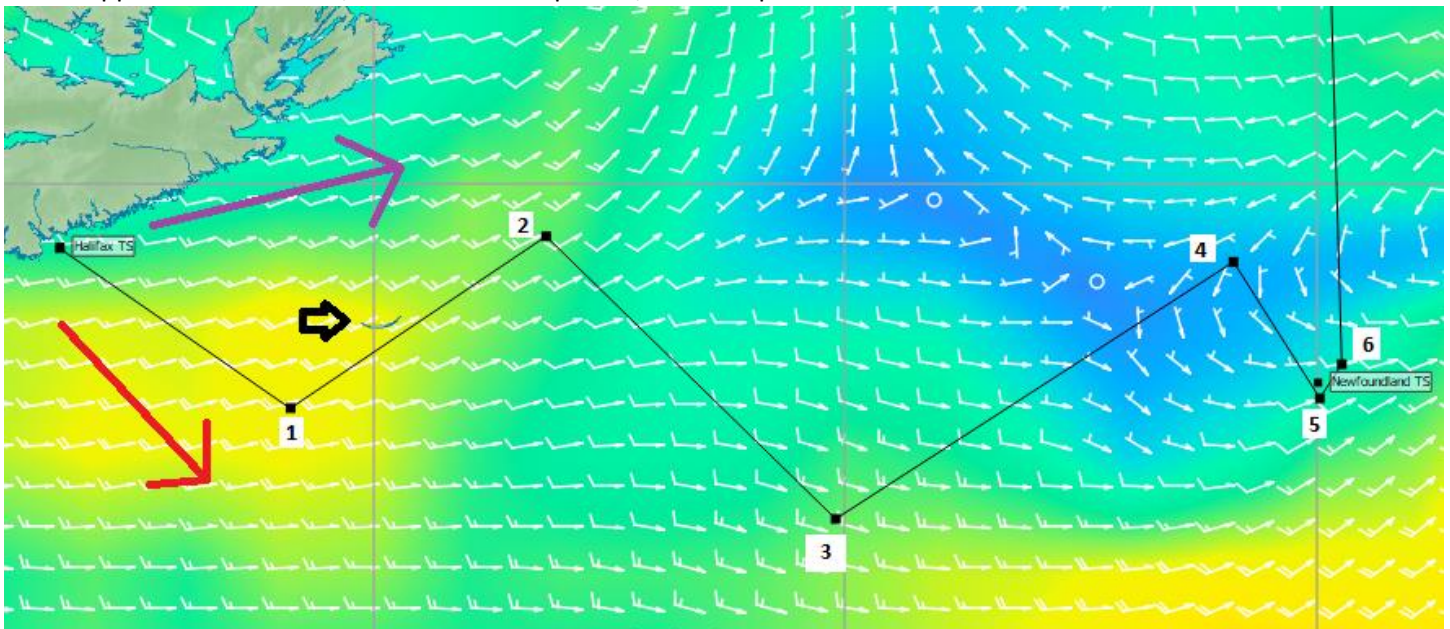
Note: Screenshots are not accurate. I don't have an actual boat trace until the end so I used a qtVLM barrier set to approximate tracks, and the winds are different than during the race. I no longer have the gribbs after 3 days.

Leg 1 was to the Newfoundland TS marker.

The only obstacle was Sable island, and it gave me some concern but not too much. I had opted to go east, although qtVLM initially wanted Renegade to sail over it, but it helped to mark the fleet separation early on. N or S.

I had started this race heading south initially because it seemed like less steering was required initially, which I like. qtVLM agreed, but my initial heading left me in virtually empty seas. The main boats went either north or farther south than Renegade initially. I wondered if I missed something, but didn't worry as Renegade was in P1 when I checked. Not usually a good thing early on but I realized that P1 was just drifting either N-S or S-N across the fleet. It was just my turn. Whew, no jinx in play.

In the screenshot, purple is North fleet, Red South, Renegade is the black line. I was not able to focus much early on so what happened is lost to me, but it's what I expected, so no surprises.



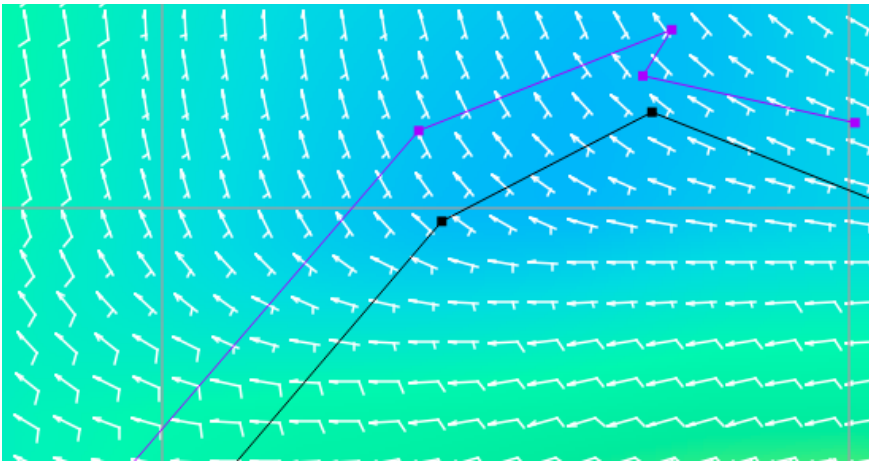
The fleets converged at Newfoundland TS, but Renegade had trouble between #3 and #4, because that was a full day of Dragon boat racing and I was busy. Only barely caught a quick update thanks to Zappe's Android App late in the day at point #4, and luckily the angle wasn't bad, but my DC's had run out after #3 so could have kept going. I recall Renegade being somewhere ahead of mid fleet at the #4 turn. DC #5 and #6 were set at the #4 tack so were ugly, but safe to

round. For #6 where I set a max speed TWA heading and let it fly for a trek north. Already Franci was leading the pack North. Since disaster had been averted, I was pleased.

Leg 2 Newfoundland TS to Le Havre.

This is where it would happen. In Ocean races there is almost always more chances to catch up or close the gap. The same was true here. For 2-3 days we headed North following a TWA curve. I was a bit more East of Franci and gang, but behind. I believe Richard, GoForIt was leading an east group of boats and everyone was heading N or NE at the time. Then, something happened overnight I hadn't seen in qtVLM or noticed in Wx Inspector. I'm not sure what happened as Renegade is offline typically from ~23:00 to 16:00 UTC time, with maybe an Android check at 04:30. When I got back online I noticed a peculiar track in Franci and Dikkehenk's tracks. Probably a lot of the other boats did the same, but I had missed it. Overnight there was a sudden coarse change to SW and then back to East again. Approximated in this screenshot, black is Renegade.

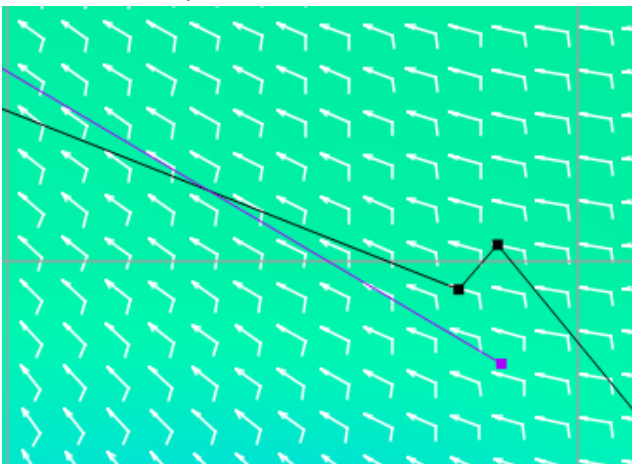
Again, the track is guessed at, but other boats had changed heading and Renegade had not, but Renegade was now ahead of Franci but Dikkenhenk was still ahead, possibly in P3 at the time.



Shortly after this a decision had to be made. The night before qtVLM had indicated a southern route was faster or basically East. The morning after it said go North. Perhaps that caused the Franci gang to suddenly veer back towards Renegade. I don't know, but hope someone mentions it in a report.

Anyway, decision time loomed. Head North with new winds across a large patch of light winds or go with earlier routing and go south/east option. Hmm, decided on going North.

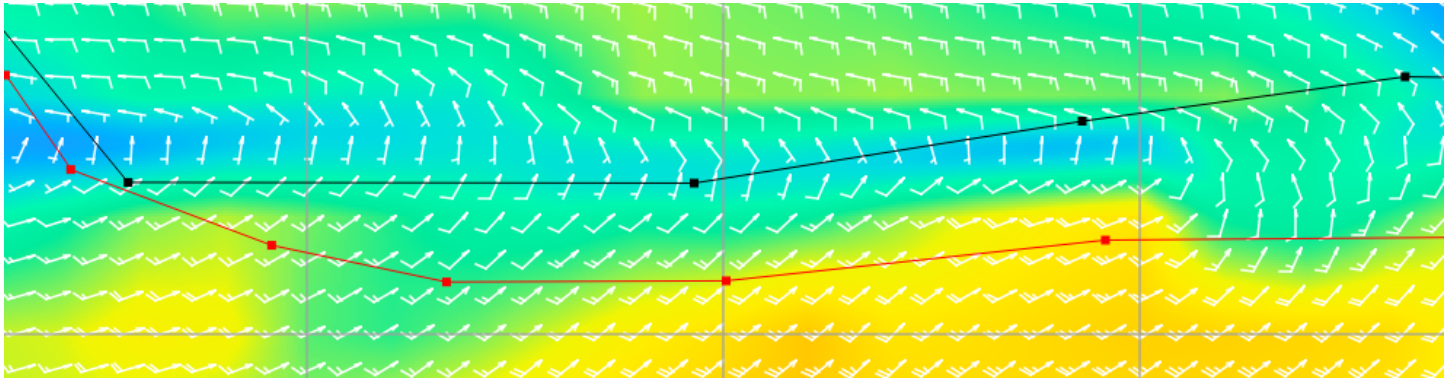
Sorry, winds are not right, they were very light so everything was slow motion and no real issue going N for a few hours since it was only a small distance.



Franci went south and crossed behind me. After review I decided North was looking more unpredictable, and if I could get South the winds looked more stable. Very important since less steering option is more appealing to me. So, ignored qtVLM and headed back south on earlier routing. Dikkehenk was thinking the same thing and also switched coarse about

that time. Aner was there but even further south already. Hmmm, felt like I was behind again, but in good company and fairly close to the fleet vanguard.

This has been one of the busiest summers for Renegade with IRL work, so I wasn't paying too much attention to what happened next. It seemed like any other '*ordinary*' mid ocean day, but I routed again with qtVLM between wind shifts. I am not sure if I had to meet the captain early, but anyway, it's lost in the mist now. A new course emerged (black). Not a lot different than the earlier(red) southern route that had reset itself from a North preferred one. However it seemed like shortcut to the same place. The tracking dot was a teeny tiny bit further east than the southern one. So I reset heading more East, and I left for the night. Would be back online in 18 hours or so.

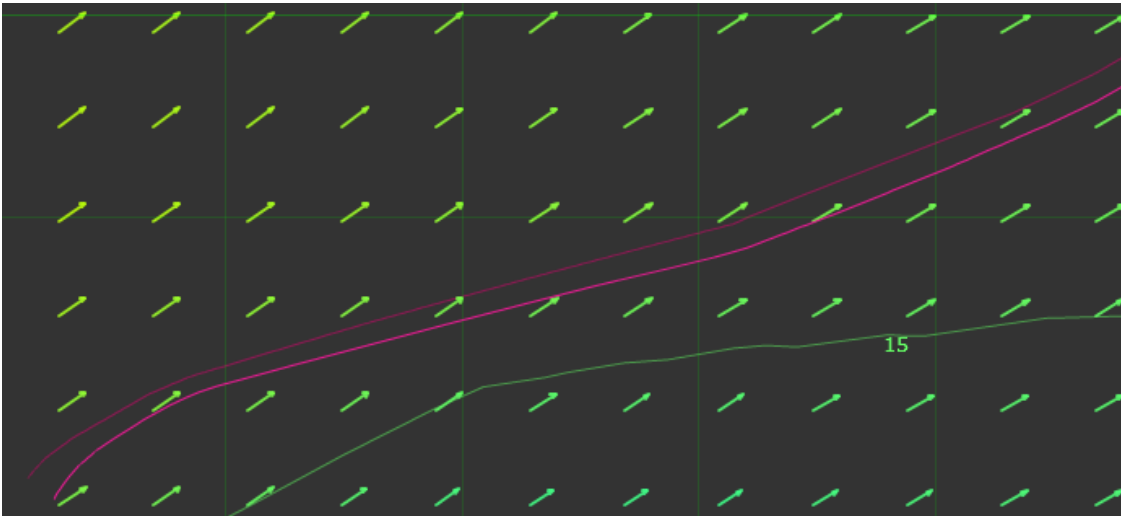


When I next got online the chat had a comment from Dikkehenk, about Renegade having a lead, and it was true. Renegade was back in P1, the north boats had gotten tangled up in a jumble of winds. Very interesting turn, and what's more Franci was behind me, Aner was further south in stronger winds, and Dikkehenk was behind also. What happened over night again? The only guess is that Renegade got a shortcut and leaped a whopping ~4.5 NM ahead of Franci #2, Aner #3 I think. So I made a comment in the chat.

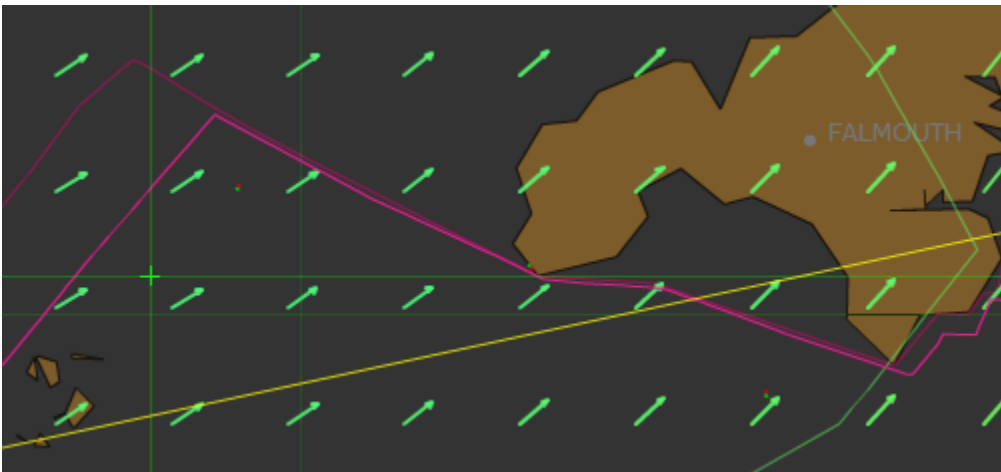
It was something like, "Leads come, and leads go, like the tides, so in a few hours Aner would be carrying the burden of P1." Plus there was almost exactly 1000 NM to Le Havre. I really thought this is not a sustainable lead, and the weekend was on us. Renegade would be offline nearly all Saturday and Sunday. So I had no expectation that the lead would hold.

Saturday, ~16:00 (before Wx) I was able to grab a quick qtVLM route and update the DC's. Still had a ~4.5 NM lead. Saturday (23:30 local EST) ~03:30 UTC, got captain to agree to a quick update, but again it was before the next Wx. So always with very old Wx info. However, Renegade still in the lead, but the lead was down to ~2 NM, and closing. Sunday ~17:00, updated DC's again, Renegade still showing the lead, but all boats except Renegade have moved SE of Renegade by ~3 NM, but distance to Le Havre still showing Renegade closer by ~1.5 NM, with a corner approaching. The turn to NE was coming, but moving further East with each Wx I checked on the weekend. Going to be scary, but was able to put in fresh DC's, and even pushed the corner 15 min East than the routing suggested since it seemed Franci would turn later. I went offline again. The corner DC fired offline.

The below screenshot of the tracks. Franci in light red, Renegade in darker pink, as seen in SOL client. Franci tuned earlier than Renegade and was to the west. Gasp!



Wow, did not expect that, and Renegade was in P3, Franci in P2, and captainjack1942 in P1. However, Renegade was further East and about even to Franci in N/S alignment. It was very close only about .19 NM, but with maneuvers along the coast approaching I didn't worry too much. Renegade was in better position. This was going to be tricky, because I had to fire the next turn by DC. Was hoping Franci did not do better, and that Renegade was not about to BBQ.



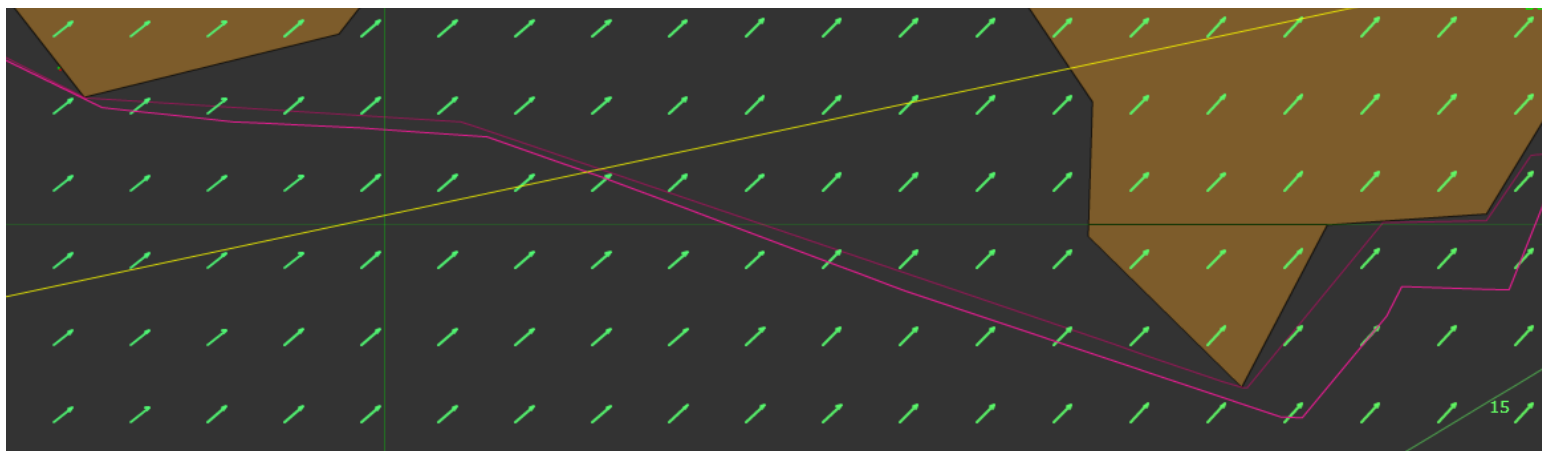
Was doing some errands with the captain so was not as attentive as I had hoped for. However conservative DC's fired ok, thanks again to qtVLM. Distance to Franci was about 2 NM.

The coast almost lost it for me. I felt nervous. How to match race Franci? One of the most dangerous SOLer's in a Tall ship, and Italian to boot. So he was looking very scary at this moment.

The coast, and Le Havre in sight waiting.

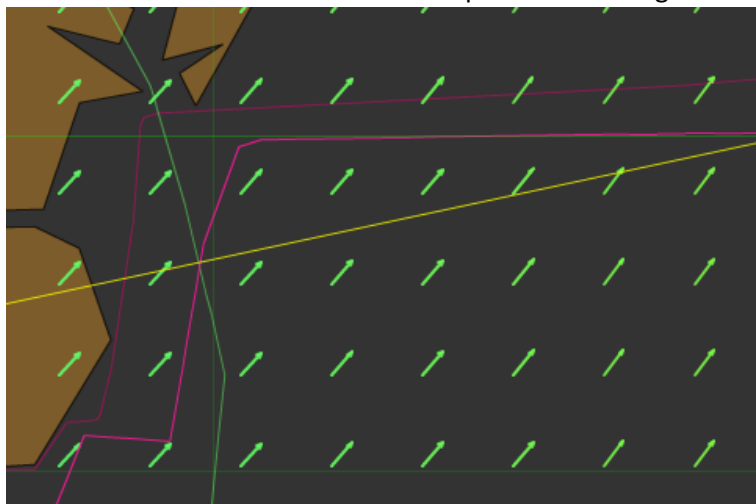
The coast was almost a disaster for me. I followed safe qtVLM headings for most of it, but realized that Franci was not. Opting for a tight rounding. One day I'll have to look at better rounding with qtVLM, but the SOL coast does not appear in there so was not sure where it was and the result was almost a loss at the last moment. YIKES!!! Stress washing of the deck.

Hard to see below, but Franci took a shorter road and cut the distance to ~1 NM, then .9 NM, .8 NM, .7 NM,



At this moment qtVLM lost AIS info on all boats and I could not find Franci’s heading. Hmmm, luckily Zappe’s Android App had recently updated and showed the heading. So I tried to match, but my box was now bigger, and lost more time. .6 NM. YIKES!

The final turn was all on DC’s because I was offline for 3 hours. Important Solemnity to keep so was not going be online at this critical moment. Franci ended up North of Renegade with a better angle and speed to the finish.



During my last race online moment, I tightened my heading to the finish and got a tiny speed boost and then had to go offline until the finish. A bit agonizing wondering would it hold. Was finally able to check about 20 or 30 min after the finish, and YES, it was Renegade on top! I’m not sure how close it got, but was enough.

WHEW!!!!,

Rank	Boat Name	Boat Type	DTG	DBL	Finish Time (UTC)
1	Renegade	Clipper 240	0	0	2017-08-16 02:58:49
2	Franci	Clipper 240	0	0	2017-08-16 03:02:26
3	DIKKEHENK	Clipper 240	0	0	2017-08-16 03:24:09
4	aner59	Clipper 240	0	0	2017-08-16 03:26:16
5	Garagiste	Clipper 240	0	0	2017-08-16 03:38:12
6	Bimmer	Clipper 240	0	0	2017-08-16 03:44:01
7	AL53_SSIta	Clipper 240	0	0	2017-08-16 03:51:40
8	Sebensa	Clipper 240	0	0	2017-08-16 04:06:26
9	Careka	Clipper 240	0	0	2017-08-16 04:16:20
10	svein	Clipper 240	0	0	2017-08-16 04:28:33

Interestingly, the top 4 or 5 boats were all close together at that moment Dikkehenk predicted the Renegade victory with ~1000 NM to go. He must have a really good crystal ball.

Alternate explanation, or a more fun one anyway:

In the moments after Renegade decided on a southern route across the Atlantic instead of a northern one, during the calm winds. Something was noticed in the sea, which was calm. A tiny person waving from the top of a sea turtle heading east. Closer inspection revealed the person to be a leprechaun heading home after a vacation. I brought him aboard because you can't just leave someone out there. He was soaked through and when he was dried, and helped along by a spot of rum thanked me and told me his story.

He said his ship struck something and went down. He barely had time to grab a few things and jump on a piece of debris. A few hours later and he came across a turtle that agreed to bring him home as he was heading that way. Turns out I found him the next morning. Anyway, he claimed to have lost his gold in the wreck and all he had was a small jar of luck powder that had gotten soaked. We laid it out to dry and he said he would help me if he could, but under the disclaimer that you can't tell which luck you'll have after it's been wet. Could be good, could be bad, but it definitely would fade fast. Only about a week of luck was what he could offer. So I agreed.

It was at this point I woke up to find Renegade in P1 with 1000 NM to go. As we approached the coast of England the little guy was able to catch a gull flight heading to Ireland from the crows nest. So he dusted the sails with the last of the sketchy luck powder and was gone. The luck was running out fast, but was just enough to get Renegade his first P1.

Renegade
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