

The wind blowing down the Portuguese coast all summer long is called the Nortada, which surprisingly means north wind! Sometimes it blows a little stronger, sometimes it moves a little further offshore, sometimes it goes into the north west, sometimes it stays more north north west, and the further west you sail away from the coast, the more north it goes and the stronger it gets. This pattern was well in evidence during our Lisboa TR, presenting numerous opportunities to get a decent run on the board, which was just as well, as our hosting server appeared to experience some gremlins once or twice.

A good gaggle got an early run in, with rumskib posting the best time – 06:51:12 – a time to beat. By Friday afternoon the 11th, the good wind was well gone, but the gibs were promising more and better on Wednesday the 16th, which was no good though, as Susan and I were travelling. It looks like Kipper and rafa went out, but rumskib's early run could not be beaten. Fortunately Thursday was also favourable, and I got my first run in.

Given the prevailing Nortada, psail's course features three main problems requiring a solution:

1. How best to gybe downwind from the Vasco Da Gama bridge to the turn at Barreiro.
2. How best to execute a 170° turn at the Setubal mark.
3. How best to work upwind from Espichel Offshore to Cascais.

1. There are two things to keep in mind here.

- There is more wind under the Lisboa shore (perhaps not IRL, but definitely acc. to NOAA).
- Any more gybes than strictly necessary will cost you dear in Performance Loss (PL).

So, even if you have to sail "hot" along the Lisboa coast, it is best to stay on starboard gybe until you can gybe for the mark, and then gybe and luff up at the mark itself.

2. Rounding Setubal involves gybing from a beam reach on port onto a beam reach on starboard. With BS likely to be in the very high teens, a sensible solution that keeps PL at no more than 7.5% (92.5% P) is difficult to find. In the end, I opted for going head-to-wind on the new gybe and then bearing off onto a course somewhat below the lay to the Troia mark (a.k.a. Ponta de Cambalhao) to make sure I rounded, and then correcting.

3. Since the wind will lift you as you head out to sea on starboard tack, it makes sense to tack in to the coast to get further inside this lift, even though this will cost you TWS. High PL's per manoeuvre however mean you should not over do it, and I think two tacks in – one once you have well-cleared Espichel point, and a second to hit the beach where you can tack to almost lay Cascais – is the best compromise.

I got 1. and 3. right on my first run, but made a complete mess of rounding Setubal. I was surprised to find I was ranked in the T10 after the weather window had passed. Those gremlins at our hosting server I suspect had something to do with that.

All week long, Friday had been promising the best wind, and in the end, so it turned out. Everybody shooting for the podium was out again, with all starting within an hour or so of each other. I must have got my ETD (estimated time of departure) pretty spot on, because I certainly messed up my mark roundings again, gybing for Troia at Setubal only to not round it at all (again!), and missing the innocuous Espichel Offshore mark as well. Mind you, so did rumskib and so did Kipper – mess up, and rafa rounded everything super safe. But hey hoh – 6:28:02 knocked 2 mins off rumskib's previous best, and a win is a win. I am best pleased!

Thank you all for the great racing.