

## Caribbean Rum Run 2017

This year Caribbean Rum Run Race was conducted between hurricanes Irma and Maria, which have devastated many Caribbean islands, leaving destruction and victims. My sympathy and prayers are with unfortunate people across Caribbean.

However, SOL fleet met stable weather with prevailing downwind sail conditions. Under these circumstances, with waypoints close in row and no WX surprises, there was no need for major, strategic decisions. Just follow the route, which did change very little WX to WX.

As many, I'm using qtVlm (v. 5.5-4 to be precise, didn't update it yet) for general guidance, and SOL WX Inspector for route fine-tuning, sailing mostly SOTP. Don't use DC Editor of any kind, may manually set 1-2 overnight DC's for minor course change or safety DC at turning point, but I'm trying to do all the major roundings from browser client. Even those 3:27 AM local time.

Unfortunate mark rounding miss by Kipper and Alex, respectively, has left me with some advantage at P1 and the rest of race was just router track follow. The only doubt was gybe point at final, downwind lag. As we were approaching, router changed its prediction, suggesting 3 gybes instead 1. There was minimal difference between routes (cca 5 min over nearly 500 NM to go) and I have chose the suggested one. Longreacher from P2 took a chance and try the other, and with just a little different WXs that follows it could pay off. If our positions were opposite, I would do the same. Congratulations Longreacher on great fight and bold move.

I wish to thank all SOLers for racing and SOL Team for all their efforts. Especially RainbowChaser for prize sponsorship and all her magnificent work on blogs, reports, PRs etc.

Finally, congratulations to my countryman Leelu on P2.  
Which leads me to an arising question I'd like to clarify, while seems there were some suspicions and rumors:  
YES, I know Leelu; YES, we are friends IRL; and NO, IN NO WAY we act together or cooperate, in this or any other race, but in virtual sailing races we fight each other with no mercy and with many benevolent insults. He is maybe relatively new in SOL, but experienced in virtual sailing.  
And a simple fact: in steady wind conditions, for close located boats, the same router will suggest the same route for all of them. Feel free to check in any race with any boats.

Hope this was enough to clear any suspicion, hereafter I'd like to offer a short story to explain my unusually long pirate name. (and maybe the reason why the best placed Italian crew is at P20 :-)))

FW all!

SimeMali / uskok\_Sime\_od\_Nehaja

September 2017.

## Uskoks, the short (hi)story

While Pirates of the Caribbean are well known, I'd like to tell a piracy story from the other part of the world. Once upon a time...

... in XVI<sup>th</sup> and XVII<sup>th</sup> Century, to be precise, the Turkish Ottoman Empire expand to the West, capturing Budapest and even reached the city walls of Vienna.



At the east Adriatic coast, in Croatia, part of Austrian Empire at that time, inhabitants and refugees from inland resisted Ottomans.

The most fearsome fighters were Uskoks (*Uskoci*, sing. *Uskok*). Their HQ was at first in Klis fortress above Split, and after Ottomans capture it, in Nehaj fortress above Senj.

Their job was fight Ottomans, and their source of income was..., well, PIRACY.

And they were extremely good in both activities! That wasn't open-sea piracy, but at a coast with so many islands, reefs and shelves light and fast ships were deadly effective. They were alike the Viking Drakkar, but without a dragonhead; Uskoks themselves were ugly enough to scare. They can even navigate in *bura*, NE wind that rush down the almost 2000 m high mountains close behind the coastline and near Senj can reach over 200 km/h gusts.



Strictly speaking, Uskoks were not pirates but corsairs, privateers with government approval to attack enemy boats. As not so many Ottomans galleys travel the Adriatic those days, it has shown that's even more profitable to rob and plunder Venetian ships, which were returning worldwide goods to Venice. No need to say, Venetians were not particularly happy to finance rival company that way, even for common benefit. They named Uskoks *Scocchi*. After unsuccessful fights against at sea and land, Venice finally started a war with Austria for governmental relocation Uskoks to inland, away from the shore.