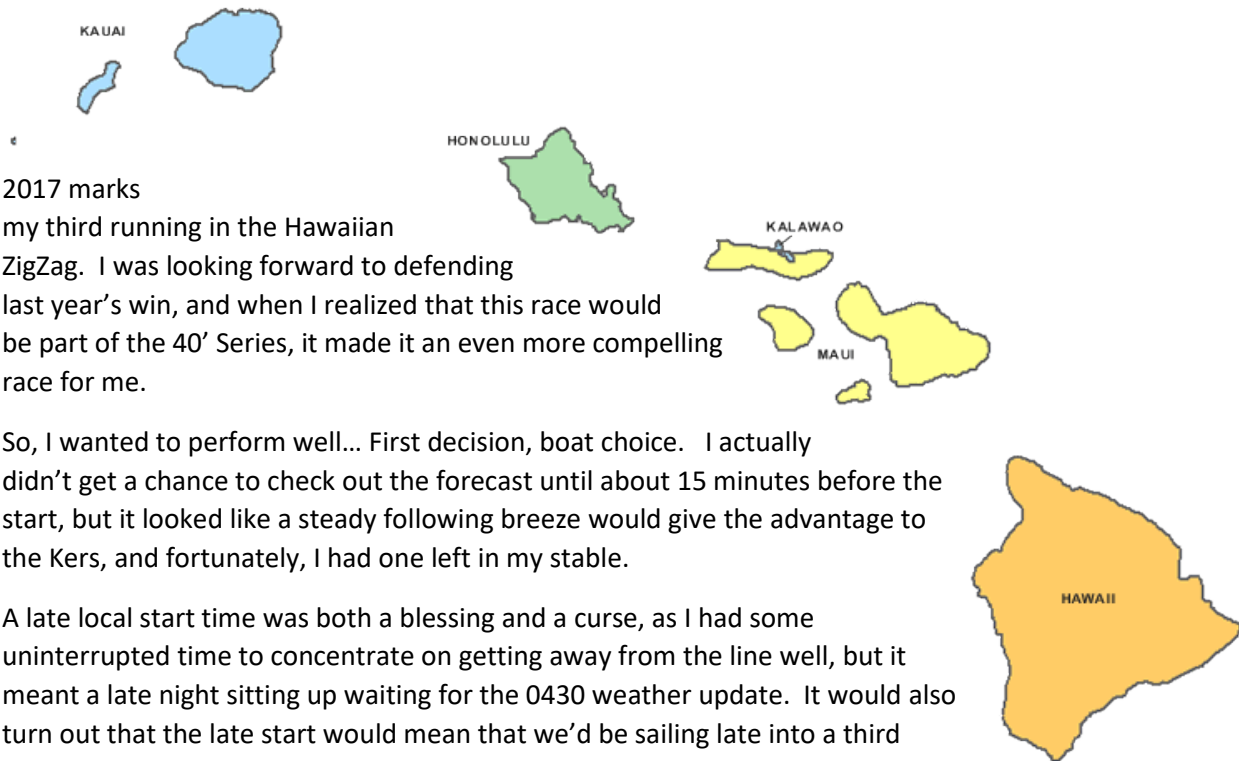


Hawaiian ZigZag 2017



2017 marks my third running in the Hawaiian ZigZag. I was looking forward to defending last year's win, and when I realized that this race would be part of the 40' Series, it made it an even more compelling race for me.

So, I wanted to perform well... First decision, boat choice. I actually didn't get a chance to check out the forecast until about 15 minutes before the start, but it looked like a steady following breeze would give the advantage to the Kers, and fortunately, I had one left in my stable.

A late local start time was both a blessing and a curse, as I had some uninterrupted time to concentrate on getting away from the line well, but it meant a late night sitting up waiting for the 0430 weather update. It would also turn out that the late start would mean that we'd be sailing late into a third night before we finished.

The three boats all performed well for the first legs, each sailing different angles based on their own performance specs, but as the fleet turned west, the Kers started to show their downwind strength. Kudos to SimeMali and Zoe for the wins in each of their classes.

Limesinferior and I had a great gybing duel along the south coast of Mali, with the two boats crossing within meters of one another eight times and ending up neck and neck as we headed north to Molokai

I awoke the next morning with a bit of a lead, *limesinferior* having had to make a couple of extra gybes to get around the west end of Molokai. With just a few short legs left, and a steady breeze blowing, I started to feel confident that I might be able to defend my 2016 win. One last hurdle, the dreaded 0430 weather update for the third night in a row. After rounding Kauai at 0200, I set a conservative DC to get around Ni'ihau, and aim for the middle of the line, just in case sleep won over my alarm clock. In the end, the alarm clock did its job and I was able to tighten up my lines a bit and slip across the line ahead of *psail* and *rafa*.

Thanks to *Jawz* for the course design, and to the SOL team for putting this on the schedule, and giving us the wrinkle of boat choice.

longreacher

September 29th, 2017