

Race Report by Patrick Butler / Patrick70119

For Race **Stockholm to St Petersburg 2018**

After being away from Sailonline for almost 3 months I just knew that I had to participate in a race again, when I saw the Stockholm to St Petersburg 2018 race I just knew that I had to take part in it. When starting the race my initial goal was to just finish and make use of the Google Earth Feed (Which I never did use enough).

When the race started I saw that the wind was starting to switch ever so slightly so I went for a bit of a higher approach towards Saaremaa which would be slower than the rest of the fleet to start off but when I changed course towards the mark I was going faster than the rest. At this point I was sitting in 37th place and I was over the moon as I had a top 50 position!

When we rounded Saaremaa, that was when I knew that this race would be much better than a Top 50 position, I rounded the mark in 6th place and I honestly couldn't believe it as after months and months away I was in the top 10 but I was very pessimistic and told myself that my top 10 position wouldn't last. This leg to Hoglandet was rather straight forward as it didn't involve much tacking and didn't take too much "brain power" of where to go so I caught a lot of my sleep in this leg.

We reached Hoglandet and I was in 5th place and I told myself that I would do my absolute best to get the best result that I could, however this is not too simple to keep an eye on your competitors and to make last minute crucial decisions when you have to attend University Classes 5 days a week, but I did make the most of it. The last leg was probably the one leg that I thought I was stupid for thinking about tacking so much BUT when I saw that the leaders were doing the same thing I felt a bit of comfort 😊 It turned out to be a rather tiring leg with all the tacks but luckily these boats performance loss was recovered quickly after every tack. This leg was the only leg I've ever been happy to not physically be on my SOL boat as if I was a crew on my boat and my skipper told me to tack the boat every 10 – 15 minutes I would NOT be impressed hehe 😊.

As the final leg was closing to an end we began getting closer and closer to our final destination and I was in 4th position and I was extremely proud of myself, however, I did have Rumskip close on my tail waiting to take my position if I messed up. I looked at the conditions ahead and with my calculations I was pretty sure that I would be at University when we had to make our final tacks towards the finish and this worried me, and I wasn't at all wrong.

Luckily for me I am studying IT: Software Development at University so we sit in class with our laptops and our cell phones, so I wasn't at too much of a disadvantage. It now came to the time that we had to do our final tacks and as I was about to do my final tack towards the finish, obviously uncle Murphy (Murphy's Law) came for a visit and my laptop battery died, so I quickly took my phone out and used the SOL application. I did my final tack and we were on our way into St Petersburg. I then saw that Kipper who was in 3rd decided to do his final tack towards the finish near the end which would cut out an extra tack that we had to do but I had more wind, so I wasn't sure if I could go past him. We inched closer and closer to the line and I was watching the Leaderboard and waiting for my DTF to say "0.00" but then I saw that I was in 3rd position right at the end and I didn't believe it, but it was true!!! I was on the Podium after being away for so long!!! 😊 I was extremely happy and almost shouted as I was so happy but those of you who know that lecture rooms are rather quiet and that wouldn't be too good of an idea 😊.

I would just like to say congratulations to Outlaw and Bonknhoot for taking the top spots and thank you to Kipper and Rumsbib for the great competition and for keeping me awake most nights. Thank you to the SOL Team and thank you to each and every SOLer who took part in this race as it was great fun! I wish you all the best of luck for your future races and will see you all soon.

Kind Regards

Patrick