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## Florida Rum Run 2019: Race Report

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by ij  
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A near return course with stable and strong winds, in headwind there and in tailwind back. Pretty straightforward setting. The weather updates are at non-typical times. I happen to like these update times much more than the ordinary ones combined with our current non-DST timezone, effectively allowing me zero missed update times in contrast to two weekly ones on the ordinary schedule.

The wind direction variations during first leg allowed little bit of easing into the sheets. I sailed very shallow S-curve to avoid very tight angle in the beginning and to better take advantage of higher wind speed near the end of the leg. At the mark, I'm within top 15 but the standings are quite unclear yet due to the very simplistic first leg.

The next leg is a pure headwind one with some wind rotations. There was no need to take it tight and there was space around so I didn't even bother to set an alarm for the night update. But in the end I was awake around that time at night anyway so I fixed to course to match the latest set of wind variations. At the next mark I was well into the top 5.

The leg after the next mark required slight detour to east, bigger to west, or navigating through little gaps in a nearly continuous reef(?) islands in the middle, all with adverse angles given the wind direction. I picked the shortest East detour alternative with OK angle (some went further east sailing east of the first islands), whereas most went to the adverse angled gaps. Almost nobody followed my pick. I had to first sail nearly close hauled course to have an angle through the islands, whereas the middle goers could gain some speed from a better angle. Most of them aimed to the first obvious gap, **Kipper1258** leading them and **Bonkhoot** eased off even more and choose a gap further away but with a less optimal angle during the gap passage.

After I passed the reef islands that limited my angle, I could bear away gaining some extra speed. **Kipper1258** attempted an island jump for the west corner of the blocking reef island but failed (I don't know if it was done on purpose or not). Others on that route sailed a safer course but had to tack twice or suffer from non-optimal angle beyond max VMG during passage. I now held the height advantage and slowly sailed past them pointing slightly lower than they. **Bonkhoot's** gap required tacks but he could keep the lead he had built while sailing lower than us. With hindsight, his route choice was probably the best of the ones available.

The weather update was delayed badly beyond the time I had available for waiting it (the update never came). Thus, I had to set the DCs onwards based on

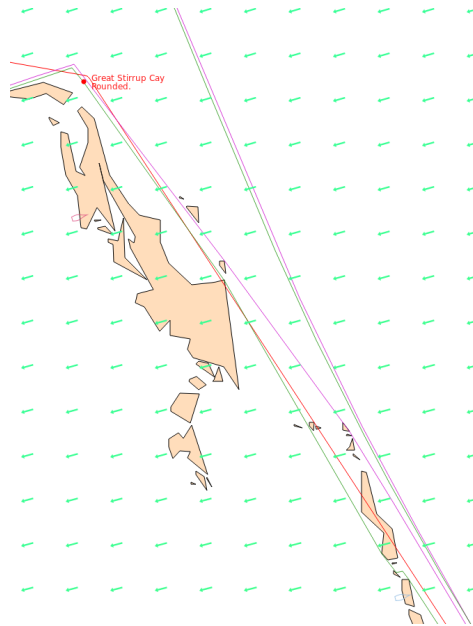


Figure 1: Routing choices through the island/reef chain (green is **bonkhoot**)

the old weather hoping for the best. The next mark required a very extreme u-turn maneuver. I aimed very close to the mark and setup an immediate gybe with performance loss optimization (to <93%) followed by setting the next course on the next server tick without further performance loss. That one tick in between is enough for me to clear the mark before heading back. It was possible that I make it back to the controls before the turn comes but it was uncertain so a weather update could spoil the party badly. I was now the second boat chasing **bonkhoot** hoping to pass him before the mark.

I arrived just in time to watch the rounding (7 minutes beforehand). I tried to adjust the course to get closer initial passage before the u-turn but I made a steering blunder in the hurry, COG 141.something vs 147.something (even after double checking the number first). So I had to quickly adjust the course slightly before the mark to fix the problem I caused (my earlier DC setup would have worked just fine for the rounding so it was entirely unnecessary to attempt those adjustments in the first place :-)). Because of blunder I failed to register well the fleet around me but I think I was 2nd and 0.04nm behind the leading **bonkhoot** at the mark. Unbeknownst to me, he had announced in the chat earlier that he'll be throwing a white flag at the rounding due to some dinner or so. His intentional sloppy (=super safe) rounding with two  $\approx 90$  degree turns lets me easily take the lead.

Rotating wind makes the optimal route back to finish to follow almost exactly the track we sailed earlier but into opposite direction. The next weather update comes and the same route is still the way to go. There cannot be weather surprises allowing other routes to win over us as the next weather update comes only near the last mark but there is a gybe where somebody else from our group could jump the gun opportunistically hoping for a favorable weather close to the mark. But luckily nobody takes that opportunity so I keep the unthreatened lead within our group. There seems to be no need to take the last mark tightly so I set up a

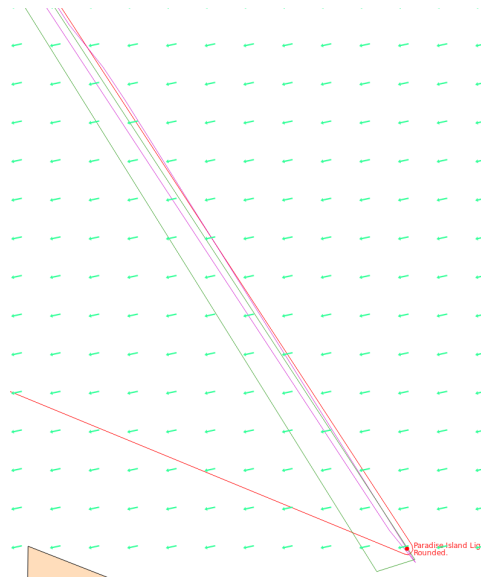


Figure 2: U-turn when rounding Paradise Island Light (green is **bonkhoot**). My steering mistake is visible near the top.

relaxed course but this night I set the alarm for the weather update, just in case.

Some small route tweaking due to the update at night and wait until the rounding that I now made tighter than earlier (it was of course pretty unnecessary). Then back to bunk. The rest is easy downwind sailing and I finish to the lower mark with one and half minute lead to **aner59** who takes 2nd place soon followed by **bonkhoot** who, for some reason, sailed to the upper mark.

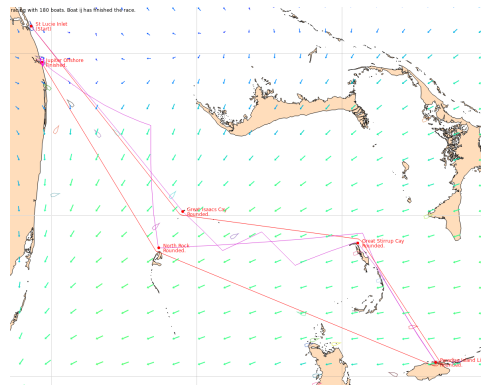


Figure 3: The overall route

I sailed most of this race using TWA steering in contrast the COG one I typically use (only part of the first leg and the approach to the u-turn mark was on COG). With weather as stable as this, it seemed quite safe and easy, and gave a good result too.