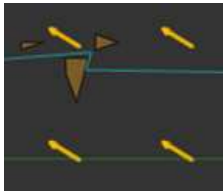


This race, at first glance, reminded me of the [Colin-Archer race](#) where I got my only podium as of this race.

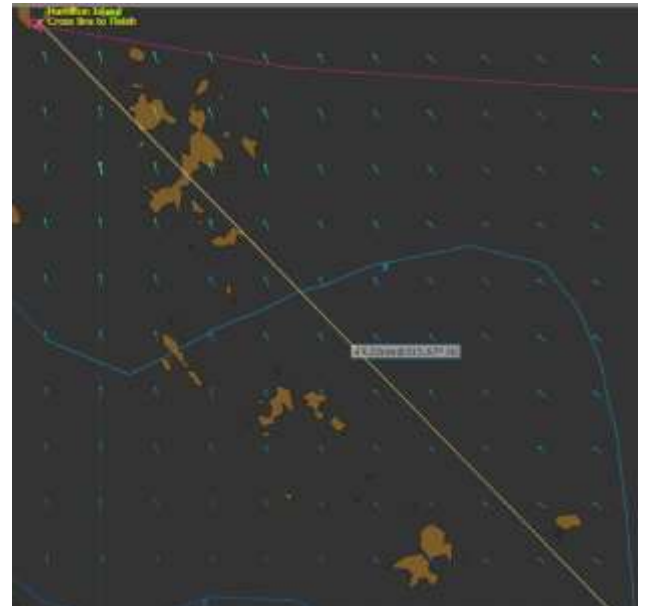
A comparison of this course to the Colin-Archer race (based on course layout):

- Both have a series of marks placed relatively close to the start which need to be rounded, which a fair number of boats will likely miss at least one of
- Both then follow into "open-ended" terrain, where you then try to get to the finish by any means as quickly as possible (depending on winds, Breaksea Spit in this race may or may not be a relevant factor for some boats)

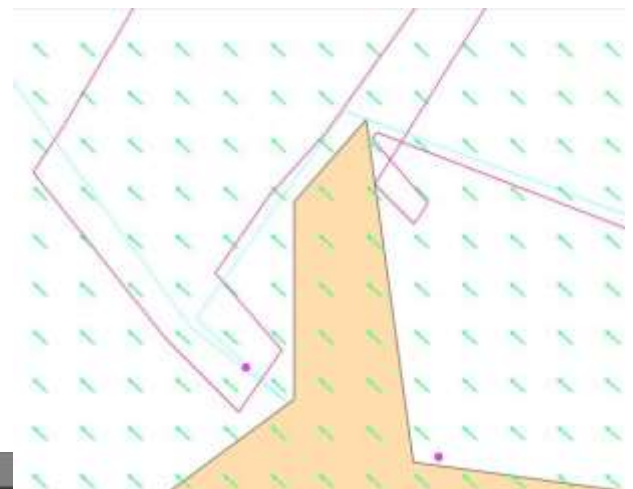


- This race, unlike Colin-Archer, has many sneaky little islands (such as Tern Island) in the last 100nm or so which would present many opportunities to BBQ for a large range of TWDs, particularly those in which the optimal path was the shortest one

Given the start time of the actual race at 1am UTC (9am Singapore time), this meant that I needed to start by setting 10+ hours of DCs. Isn't that awesome? It would take me past NW Channel Fairway Buoy and halfway to the Fraser Island mark. This would also prevent the use of certain strategies like "follow-the-leader" for this part of the race as I had done in Colin-Archer.



In the PRs prior to this race, I had attempted to set the DCs necessary to complete them. To set competitive ones was more difficult than it seemed, even with the help of Wx Inspector. For instance, in the first PR, I had set commands that were meant to head slightly north of the land just prior to M3... and BBQ'd right at the tip. (I just so happened to wake up for an instant that night, thus completing that PR around 55 mins behind the leader.) That won't be good in the actual race, would it.

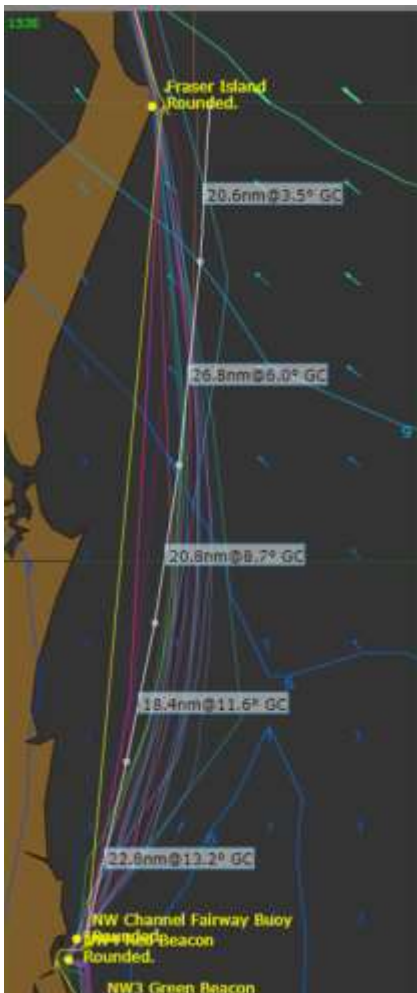


Huh? The race is closed even though we're still only at "Practice sailing"? Oh ok   
thankfully, refreshing the page shows that we will be racing the actual thing after all!

2.45am					3.30am					5.30am					8.00am					Noon				
Rank	Boat Name	DTG	DBL		Rank	Boat Name	DTG	DBL		Rank	Boat Name	DTG	DBL		Rank	Boat Name	DTG	DBL		Rank	Boat Name	DTG	DBL	
1	Tyger	506.2	0		1	Tyger	498.7	0	1	Tyger	483.6	0	1	Tyger	454.5	0	1	Wlrmirekd	406.0	0	1	Wlrmirekd	406.0	0
2	LittleSurprise	506.2	0.0		2	Wlrmirekd	498.7	0.0	2	CollegeFund	483.7	0.1	2	Wlrmirekd	454.7	0.2	2	StingFI	406.0	0.0	2	StingFI	406.0	0.0
3	Wlrmirekd	506.2	0.0		3	LittleSurprise	498.7	0.0	3	AndyS172	483.7	0.1	3	bonknhoot	454.7	0.2	3	bonknhoot	406.1	0.1	3	bonknhoot	406.1	0.1
4	bonknhoot	506.2	0.0		4	StingFI	498.7	0.0	4	LittleSurprise	483.8	0.1	4	LittleSurprise	454.8	0.3	4	SKOVSER	406.1	0.1	4	SKOVSER	406.1	0.1
5	Frangipani	506.2	0.1		5	hew565	498.7	0.1	5	StingFI	483.9	0.2	5	StingFI	455.3	0.8	5	azur	406.5	0.5	5	azur	406.5	0.5
6	azur	506.2	0.1		6	bonknhoot	498.7	0.1	6	captJack1942	483.9	0.2	6	HappyHour	455.4	0.9	6	batatabh	406.6	0.6	6	batatabh	406.6	0.6
7	HappyHour	506.2	0.1		7	CollegeFund	498.8	0.1	7	bonknhoot	483.9	0.3	7	captJack1942	455.5	0.9	7	Garagiste	406.6	0.6	7	Garagiste	406.6	0.6
8	StingFI	506.2	0.1		8	AndyS172	498.8	0.1	8	Wlrmirekd	483.9	0.3	8	SKOVSER	455.5	1.0	8	LittleSurprise	406.6	0.6	8	LittleSurprise	406.6	0.6
9	brellis	506.2	0.1		9	HappyHour	498.8	0.1	9	HappyHour	483.9	0.3	9	calmxy	455.8	1.3	9	Tyger	406.9	0.9	9	Tyger	406.9	0.9
10	hew565	506.2	0.1		10	captJack1942	498.8	0.1	10	Garagiste	484.1	0.4	10	hew565	455.8	1.3	10	HappyHour	407.6	1.7	10	HappyHour	407.6	1.7
11	Hrtbill	506.3	0.1		11	SKOVSER	498.8	0.2	11	SKOVSER	484.1	0.4	11	batatabh	456.0	1.4	11	batseba	407.7	1.7	11	batseba	407.7	1.7
12	Garagiste	506.3	0.1		12	brandystrega	498.9	0.2	12	azur	484.1	0.4	12	batseba	456.1	1.5	12	hew565	407.9	2.0	12	hew565	407.9	2.0
13	Kinkymiou	506.3	0.1		13	azur	498.9	0.2	13	batseba	484.3	0.7	13	Garagiste	456.1	1.6	13	captJack1942	409.6	3.6	13	captJack1942	409.6	3.6
14	brandystrega	506.3	0.1		14	brellis	498.9	0.2	14	batatabh	484.3	0.7	14	Hallbut68	456.5	2.0	14	Go4IT	409.7	3.7	14	Go4IT	409.7	3.7
15	Bimmer	506.3	0.1		15	calmxy	498.9	0.3	15	calmxy	484.6	0.9	15	goddess	456.7	2.2	15	brandystrega	409.9	3.9	15	brandystrega	409.9	3.9
16	SKOVSER	506.3	0.1		16	Go4IT	499.1	0.4	16	Go4IT	484.6	1.0	16	azur	456.8	2.2	16	Hallbut68	409.9	4.0	16	Hallbut68	409.9	4.0
17	AndyS172	506.3	0.1		17	Garagiste	499.1	0.4	17	hew565	484.7	1.1	17	CollegeFund	456.8	2.2	17	calmxy	410.6	4.6	17	calmxy	410.6	4.6
18	goddess	506.3	0.1		18	intermezzo	499.1	0.4	18	Fallabella	485.0	1.4	18	AndyS172	457.0	2.5	18	Bimmer	411.0	5.0	18	Bimmer	411.0	5.0
19	CollegeFund	506.3	0.1		19	batseba	499.1	0.4	19	goddess	485.2	1.5	19	Go4IT	457.1	2.5	19	brellis	411.6	5.7	19	brellis	411.6	5.7
20	intermezzo	506.3	0.1		20	batatabh	499.2	0.5	20	Bimmer	485.3	1.6	20	Fallabella	457.8	3.3	20	goddess	411.9	6.0	20	goddess	411.9	6.0
21	batseba	506.3	0.2		21	Fallabella	499.3	0.6	21	Hallbut68	485.4	1.7	21	brellis	458.6	4.1	21	AndyS172	412.0	6.1	21	AndyS172	412.0	6.1
22	batatabh	506.3	0.2		22	goddess	499.4	0.7	22	brandystrega	485.8	2.2	22	brandystrega	459.0	4.5	22	CollegeFund	414.7	8.8	22	CollegeFund	414.7	8.8
23	calmxy	506.3	0.2		23	JlincSB	499.4	0.7	23	JlincSB	486.2	2.3	23	Hrtbill	459.5	5.0	23	trew55	415.0	9.0	23	trew55	415.0	9.0
24	Huzagny	506.3	0.2		24	Kinkymiou	499.4	0.8	24	Hrtbill	487.0	3.2	24	Bimmer	459.9	5.4	24	Fallabella	415.5	9.5	24	Fallabella	415.5	9.5
25	FR_Pat13120	506.4	0.2		25	rss	499.6	1.0	25	brellis	487.1	3.4	25	adlib1	460.0	5.5	25	Hrtbill	416.8	10.8	25	Hrtbill	416.8	10.8

All times are given here in UTC. The earlier marks were rounded between ~3am-5.30am.

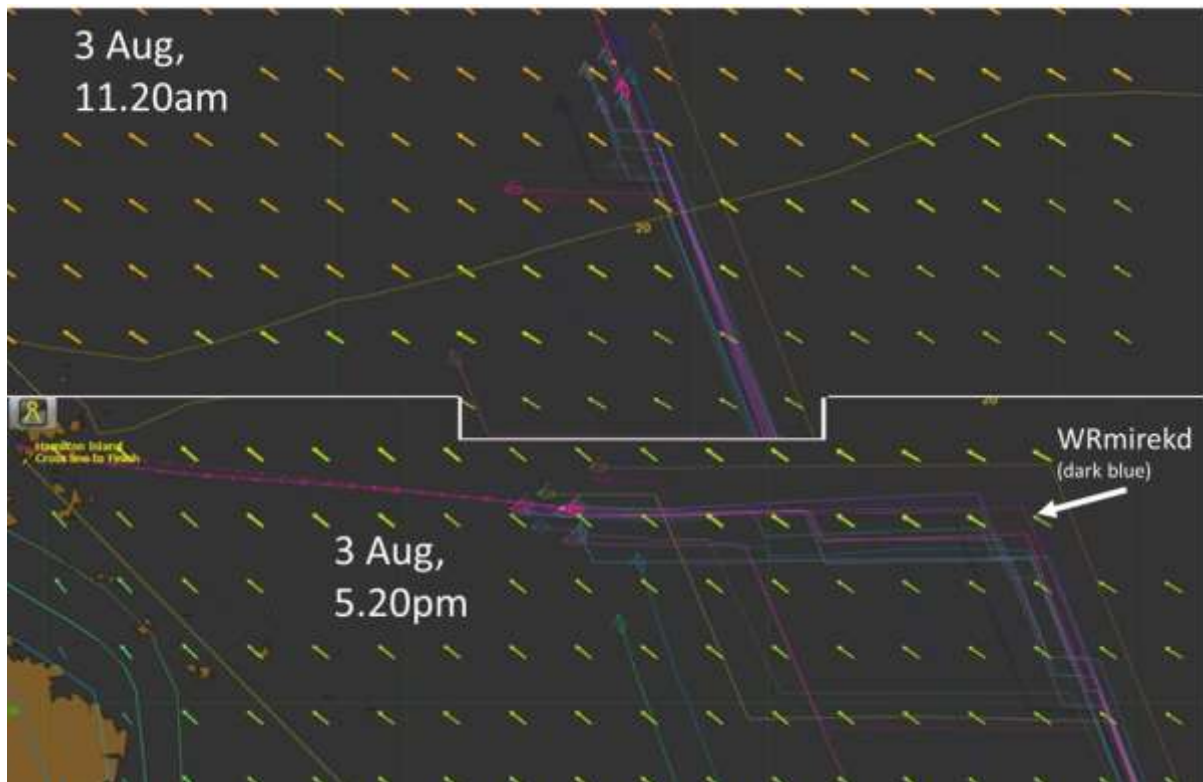
I "observed" the first part of the race by observing the ranking and also the DTG of my boat - while this "ranking" may be less reliable between marks in open water, it was the only way for me to track progress at this point. While the DCs were somewhat less competitive than I would have preferred, the first 4.5 hours did see me (through a continuously decreasing DTG) round every mark through NW Channel Fairway Buoy.



While getting lunch at work (~5am UTC), I encountered a couple of people who supposedly came from Marina Bay Sands and needed someone to buy food for them, having spent all their money gambling. Then it occurred to me that the DC I set for the stretch between NW Channel Fairway Buoy to Fraser Island was also an unnecessarily risky gamble. I had set a DC for this stretch as a single TWA command. A TWA of 128° (also the max speed TWA) appeared to get me almost directly to the sweet spot, and was an improvement over any single COG command. Bearing in mind that this stretch would be raced after the Wx change, there would be a good chance of a BBQ if I raced it that close, hence the decision to go for TWA 126°. (The distance markers at left approximate that path relative to the top 20 boats' actual paths)

What I should have done is break that TWA command into shorter interval COG commands. That way, it would be less vulnerable to changes in the Wx which I would be unable to observe or respond to. The afternoon saw my distance behind leader steadily increase, which I believed then to be because the change in Wx went the opposite direction and was causing me to go too far from shore.

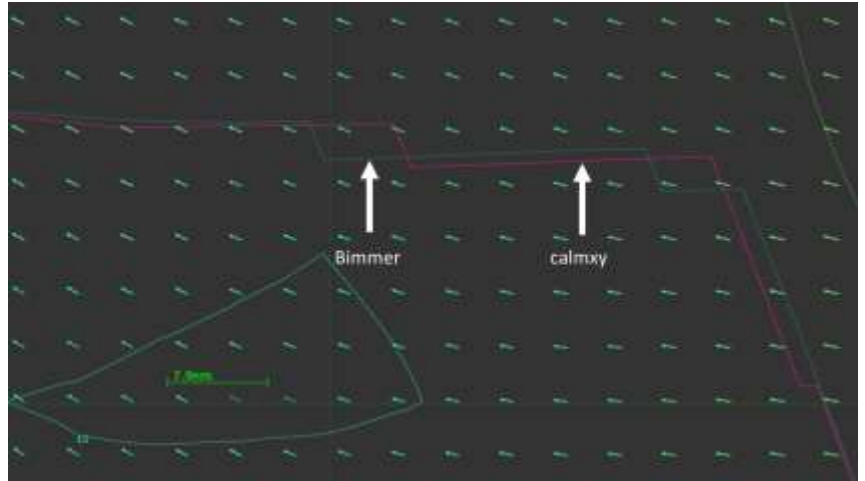
When I finally got back from work, I opened the computer and found that the TWA 126° command was never actually sent; it was set to TWA 127.5° instead (what I used on an earlier iteration). The TWA 126° command would have been more beneficial given the stronger winds there (in fact the leaders and Bimmer probably went closer to TWA 120° followed by TWA 145°); if my boat were on that path, it would have been just about the correct time to make a beeline for the Fraser Island mark. But there was essentially nothing I could do (until Fraser Island) except watch the gap increase further. This gap of ~30 mins behind WRmirekd and Bonknhoot would remain all the way to the finish; I would not be getting a podium like how I did in Colin-Archer. I guess I should be thankful that I made it this far in the race without a BBQ.



Bimmer and I rounded Fraser Island at around the same time. What followed was essentially a 400nm-long duel (measured by actual distance sailed) with Bimmer for what would be 11th place. Luckily, the winds, remaining near-constant ~20 knots and TWD of ~125°, meant that we would not have to deal with all those SLIs as we headed further to the north (and away from the SLIs) before turning west. The shrewd guess was to go on the max TWA downwind for around 14 hours before making a single gybe for the finish, and that was what WRmirekd actually did to take home the win for this race.

However, many of us did more than one gybe between Fraser Island and the finish. There were tiny variations in the wind speed and direction within these waters that one may have been able to take advantage of. But the high-speed gybes necessary to reach them are costly in terms of boat performance, which meant that decisions had to be made if it was worth making extra pairs of gybes; would the better wind be enough to offset performance loss?

Bimmer and I each made two such pairs of gybes, the result being that neither gained a significant lead on the other. It was only around 4 hours to the finish that (with both predictors enabled) I noticed the TWA path and the COG path were crossing each other, at the finish line, and the TWA path was faster by one minute, so I switched to the TWA path. That crucial minute from this manoeuvre enabled me to finish ahead of Bimmer in 11th.



I could have done better, but thank you all once again for such an amazing race, especially Bimmer who kept me on my toes for the last 400nm!