

# SSANZ Lewmar Baltic 50 2019 Race Report

by

**Tyger**

The early hours of Saturday morning were a busy time for a SOLer on the east coast of Australia. First, a 0300 start in the Vineyard Race followed by a 0725 start in the SSANZ Baltic 50. Both races had unusually brisk and consistent winds so the strategy was to start the Vineyard and then set a few minor DCs for the next 5 hours. In New Zealand, I could set a DC start and another to get me around Brown Island before getting out of bed for the Rocky Bay Mark. This gave me an extra 45 minutes in bed.

Approaching Rocky Bay, Tyger was placed around 11<sup>th</sup> - time to get serious. Past experience told me that rounding marks in this series was paramount and could mean many places lost or gained. I don't try to preempt my little pink boat by changing direction before the jump. I wait until I know where she is and then hit the button. Fortunately, Tyger landed in the right position to change course immediately. So, I managed to get a good rounding of the Rocky Bay Mark and to my surprise, I was up in the top 5.

From there it was simple a matter of 'point and shoot' to get around the south east corner of Waiheke Island, Motukaha Island and on to The Haystack. Getting around those 'corners' had Tyger in 2<sup>nd</sup> spot behind bonknhoot on the reach to The Haystack. .... time for coffee and hot buttered crumpet.

Again, getting a good rounding of The Haystack was very important. A bit of an overshoot didn't seem to be disadvantageous and still I was up there with bonknhoot, rafa, brewman and a bunch of serious SOLers. And again just point and shoot to get around the north east tip of Rakino Island and stick close to the eastern shore to minimise distance covered.

Tyger managed that and now some strategic thought was needed for the close hauled punch south. Do I maintain optimum vmg and put in two tacks later to get past Motuihe Island or pinch up slightly in order not to incur the performance hit of the tacks. I decided to pinch up and to my surprise, I maintained 2<sup>nd</sup> position all the way to Motuihe with bonk and rafa choosing the vmg option Tyger temporarily took 1<sup>st</sup> as they tacked. Port tack was now the best for vmc but I ventured further south to lay the finish line with just one more tack. Choosing when to tack was important – do I go when the vmg angle comes up or venture on for a better vmc. A faster course between vmg and vmc, only about 3 degrees past vmg, was the choice I made.

Bonknhoot tacked again to come down to meet me and by this time had retaken 1<sup>st</sup> spot by a narrow margin. Rafa continued on port tack to lay the line with one more leg. A very tight situation, anyone of us could still win. I felt confident of holding at least a podium as bonk was slightly ahead but I was up to windward with a better (faster) angle to the port end of the finish line. Nail biting stuff, who would get there first?

Then I saw bonknhoot tack. What was this, some genius tactic to get to windward of me .... or had something gone wrong. Indeed something had gone wrong, a dreaded lurking DC had decided to take the good ship bonknhoot south. So now the question was, could I beat rafa to the line and as we closed in I was more and more confident that I would.

Tyger took 1<sup>st</sup> place for the second year in a row. I quite like the SSANZ series but having missed Race 2, I was not in the running to defend my series championship. I gladly pass that title to LittleSurprise and look forward to returning again next year for more close competition. Congratulations also to brewman who just pipped rafa for 2<sup>nd</sup> place. It took the server a few moments to workout the difference between them. Brewman followed the same strategy as I ... was it those extra performance hits that made the difference?

I would also like to congratulate SSANZ for putting on an excellent series each year and the Young 88 Association for their support of the Sailonline virtual series. SOL will be back in 2020 to do it all over again.

Tyger