

NEWPORT BERMUDA 2020

I am an 80-year old who last participated in a Newport to Bermuda Race some 30 years ago on Paul Hubbard's Bermudian boat Tonka. I was excited to see that I could participate in a Newport to Bermuda Race on SOL since IRL I am unlikely to be able to do so again. I registered my online boat Satori as a Sun Fast 3300 and this was my first time using SOL.

On Saturday the posted Weather Alert at 2215 woke me from a power nap in my online cockpit. At the time I had Satori's autopilot sailing on TWA! This was 3 hours before a predicted dramatic 360° clocking of the wind S/E/N/W/SW. I was astounded to see that in 2 hours Satori's autopilot using TWA predicted Satori to be sailing to the Azores! Of course, I immediately switched the autopilot to COG. The wind clocking started at 0105 UTC on Sunday and continued for an hour and a half. The Sun Fast 3300 fleet were in the midst of it and I stayed glued to the helm. In that hour and a half I changed the COG course 42 times or approximately every 2 minutes! Yes, this is just like IRL!

Meanwhile, I changed the Settings to switch off the display of TWA since viewing that "snake" just through me off! I turned off viewing TWA one other time in the race when the pending wind change was dramatic and put a snake on the screen. I only made use of the Delayed Command at the Start and at Mills Breaker Buoy for the initial course to the finish line. As a result I was at the helm the duration of the race with Off Watch breaks! As I mentioned in the Chat room I was pleased to be in my first SOL race and be the 1st of 4 Canadian boats in the Sun Fast 3300 fleet finishing in 21st place in 93 hours and 23 minutes with an average boat speed of 6.8 knots based on the course mileage of 636nm.

I really enjoyed the experience. I kept myself occupied while at the helm by creating a proper Ships Log in Excel that runs to 13 pages in reduce print with half hour to hourly commentary. I have shared this Log with 8 other RCYC Members to show them how close it compares with the real thing! I have challenged them to meet Satori on the SOL Mackinac Race Course in July. Has the Chicago Yacht Club made a similar partnership arrangement with SOL for that race?

I was pleased to be allowed to join the SYC and was disappointed that so many other participants failed to do so. I naively hope that they made a donation to SYC! I know that they are not poor! Maybe SYC should politely invite them to join post-race asking them if they enjoyed the experience! Thanks again to all the SOL volunteers. This was a welcome relief to the boredom of isolation during this Covid-19 pandemic.

Satori/June 2020