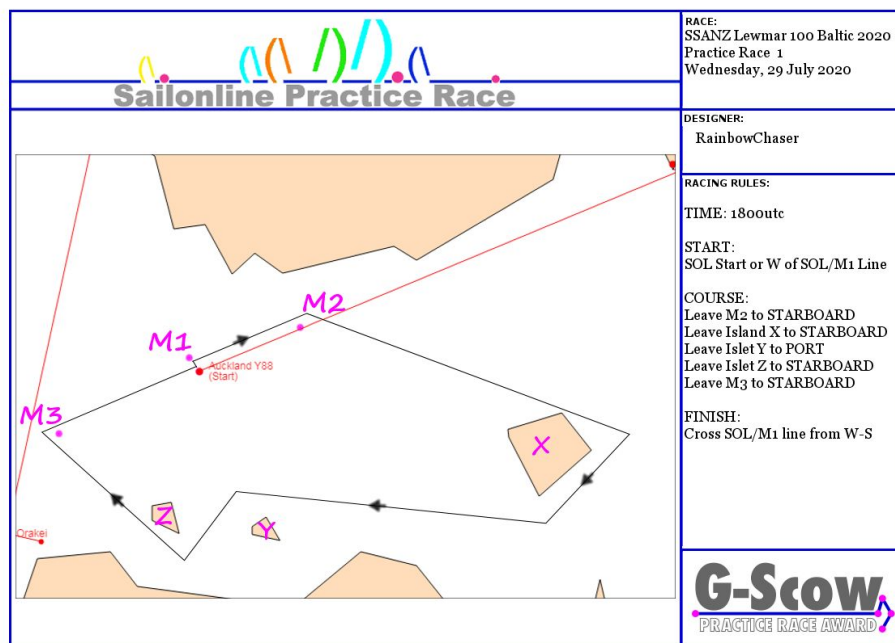


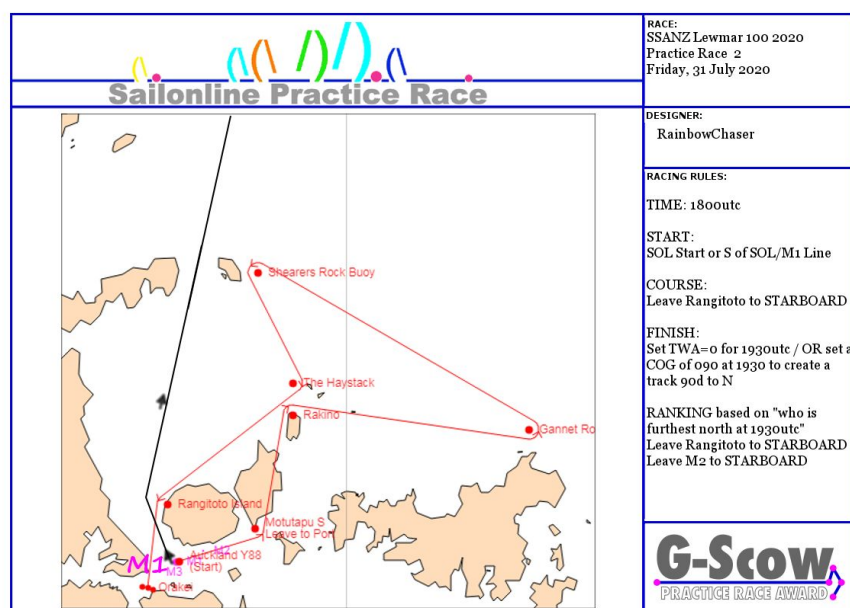
Timelapse (Second PR + actual race)

First Practice Race



Unfortunately, I slept right through this. This was a waste of a rare “pink leading boat” Practice Race, given that I had finished rounding all the marks. Unusually, the next ranked boat at this point had a DTF of 20+ nm.

Second Practice Race



This required us to head as far north as possible within the allotted 90 mins. It reminded me of the Auckland to Russell race, where we would essentially keep some distance from the coastline (depending on wind gradient) and keep heading north until Cape Brett Light, before making that turn. Of course, even ignoring race boundaries and given the strong winds, to reach that far before Towback would only have been attainable with zero-perf-loss DN Iceboats.

Our Young 88's were just slow enough that Whangaparaoa Peninsula was generally out of reach within 90 mins. Hence, the strategy was different in that it wasn't necessary to head sufficiently east (and more into the headwind) to clear this peninsula. Instead, it was a matter of managing the wind gradient and TWA angle for more speed in the stronger wind. Rod did this best and won the Practice Race.

Actual Race - Start to Rakino

While south of Rangitoto and Motutapu Islands, taking the northern track or southern track proved to be equally quick, provided the execution was done properly. Most took the southern route, though, probably because it's easier to set up a single tack as compared to multiple on the northern route.

Actual Race - Rakino to Gannet

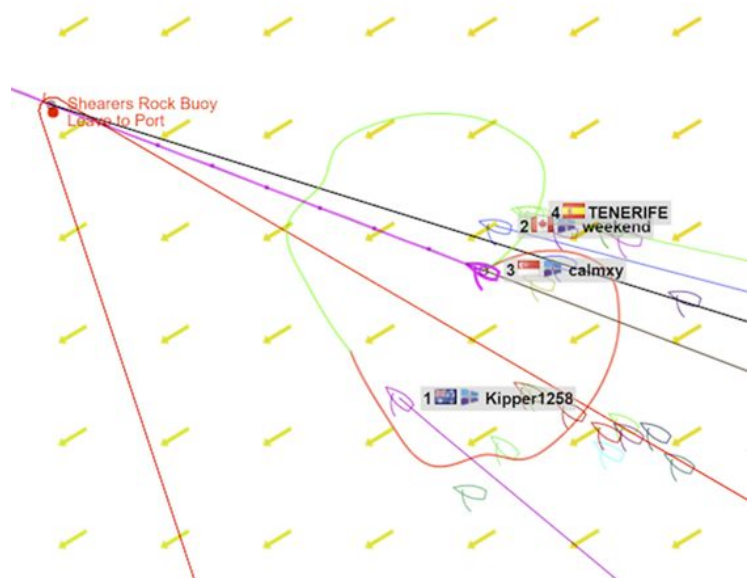
The Noises comprise several SLIs which could be annoying to deal with, if there was more "west" in the winds that necessitated tacking around them. However, this was not the case; apart from tacking once along Rakino's northwest coast, sailing the rhumb line cleared this section.

Actual Race - Gannet to Shearers

Perhaps since I was up since 1.30am in Singapore (1730 UTC) and couldn't sleep properly beforehand, I did actually fall asleep somewhere along the hour-long stretch between Rakino to Gannet. Luckily, the DC brought me around Gannet Rock safely... though now that I think of it, it probably added a few extra seconds that let Kipper1258 maintain the lead. Still, this was better than what had happened to me in many other races in July 2020.

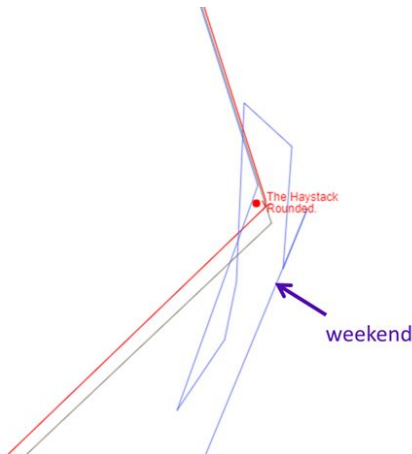
By the time Gannet Rock was rounded, the competition had thinned out significantly. Many had BBQ'd at various places, while others missed marks and had to reround them. While the Young 88 can sail close to both the headwind (TWA 33) and tailwind (TWA 165+) optimally in stronger winds (~20 knots), it does have a significant depression in its polar around TWA 115. Sailing the rhumb line for this stretch, as some had done, would have placed them smack in the middle of the depression; the estimated loss is around 2 mins.

The execution of the polar hop(s) was interesting. While I opted for a more northerly route, Kipper1258 did the south variant and weekend did 2 such hops. That strategy saw weekend, with a prior best finish of 14th, lead the race as of Shearers Rock Buoy.



Actual Race - Shearers to Haystack

Using the 4.30pm Wx, the rhumb line would be at TWA 106 approx., which was close to the point where polar hopping was required. Hence, this had to be watched closely since a slight shift in wind direction was all that was required. However, the 10.30pm Wx made the rhumb line change to TWA 103, so the rhumb line remained the optimal solution.



While Kipper1258 and I were fighting it out for 2nd place, weekend made the course change at The Haystack mark too early. Perhaps this was due to pressure? It was really unfortunate, since this could have been his first win after 200+ races without a Top 10 finish. This was immediately corrected, and he went on to finish 4th, but now Kipper1258 and I were fighting for the win instead.

Actual Race - Haystack to Finish

The winds made it seem like a pair of gybes would be necessary to reach Rangitoto. However, when thinking about the opening of the Traverse City race and considering the rather small downwind VMG differences of the Young 88 polar, I recalled that pinching can be faster if performance loss of gybing is taken into consideration. Checking on Kipper's AGL also revealed that on the 10.30pm Wx, only the first 6 mins or so of the rhumb line would be outside optimal TWA range and was indeed faster than any strategy that involved gybing.

Kipper1258 must have thought of the same strategy, as we both adjusted our TWA until we were pointing right at Rangitoto's northwest coast. After some very precise rounding of Rangitoto's western coast and the occasional server jump where I briefly got the "pink leading boat", the server decided that Kipper1258's boat was very slightly ahead (2 seconds) and awarded him the win. Well done!

Next: SSANZ Lewmar 50

With the 6th place finish in the first SSANZ race (also the only top 10 for me in July 2020), this puts me at 8 points for this series. If I can get a podium finish in the final SSANZ race (also a SPRCH race this time), then I am guaranteed to win the series - definitely attainable, but only if I don't make mistakes as I did in certain other races.