

Vineyard 2020 race report

This year Vineyard Race, IMHO, offered no major navigation challenges, but tested skipper's stamina and willingness not to sleep. As SOL skippers' home waters extend all around the Globe, everyone gets equal chance for own dog-watch WX eventually. And with NOAA's nam_awip grib. in Europe it makes owl-friendly 4:45 AM.

From race start, options were: close to shore, faster but longer, or stay in weaker wind, slower but shorter, and everything in between, with no significant difference. At the end of the first leg, Kipper's more direct approach gave him a small advantage at Buzzards Bay Light Mark, but the front of the fleet was still pretty compact. Down to Block Island Mark – mainly straight sailing. But then...

Somewhere near the mark, new WX came in that called for drastic route reconfiguration. New situation called for racers to follow the wind twist deep into Tobaccolot Bay and then up along Gardiners Island to Orient Point. I'm not sure what happened to Kipper, but presume he remained on old DC's and lost his lead.

After Orient Point the current grib suggested multiple tacks along the coastline, but again the new WX brought major tactical change, allowing boats to proceed directly to finish. Those who have responded quickly took the lead. Sailing Long Island Sound was peaceful till 2:45 AM WX, when a new approach become urgent, needing a switch to max upwind VMG mode to reach The Cows Mark directly. Those who overslept WX and remained on their previous route were forced to tack and lose ground.

At the end Šime managed to run rafa down, whose bow was all the time worryingly close, forcing to the highest precision, but WRmirekd was uncatchable, sailing sharp and fast to well deserved victory. Congratulations and gratitude for a great race to both, as well to all participating SOLers. And of course a big thanks to SOL Team for all their efforts.

Hope next year Vineyard Race will be at least equally enjoyable (but with WX times more suitable for daylight creatures), wish you all fair winds and fast routes!