

# Quahog Cup 2021

## SOL race 1451

The race was a 35 mile sprint in Narragansett Bay, starting at 15:00 UT on Saturday, March 20<sup>th</sup> starting and finishing in Newport Harbor. The course is shown on a NOAA chart on the next page. My track is missing from the initial part.

I had planned the first, downwind part of the course up to the Rumstick Rock mark based on the 10:30 forecast. The wind was light, around 9 knots from the South West, initially a little weaker and increasing towards the end. The first leg was obviously a straight broad reach from the start to the first mark Rose Island. As the name suggests, it is actually an island, although that does not show up even on the high resolution SOL map. Below is a picture of it looking eastwards towards Newport. The three conspicuous masts behind the Island belong to the Maltese Falcon. The picture was taken in 2011 during my second visit to Newport.



From there it was a run northward. I had noticed that there was a slight wind speed gradient with more speed on the Rhode Island side in the East and a little less on the Conanicut Island side to the West. With the help of the AGL tool I found out that it was possible to closely follow the Rhode Island shore and pass East of Coasters Harbor Island without taking a larger risk. It was not necessary to gybe immediately at the Rose Island mark nor in close proximity to the coast, and without deviating a lot from the downwind target angles. So that was my plan.

By only looking at the SOL map I thought that the Island was Goat Island and I was passing near Newport Shipyard. That is a nice place to watch really big yachts. When I had a look into their boat shed (a really BIG boat shed), there was just one vessel inside, the J-class Endeavour, with a gigantic underwater hull.

I continued with my strategy to follow the Rhode Island coast with 6 more gybes, leaving Dyer island to port and passing a place called Melville, home of the New England Boatworks. The next pictures were taken from there. One is looking West towards Prudence Island where the second mark Hog Island Buoy is just off the right margin.







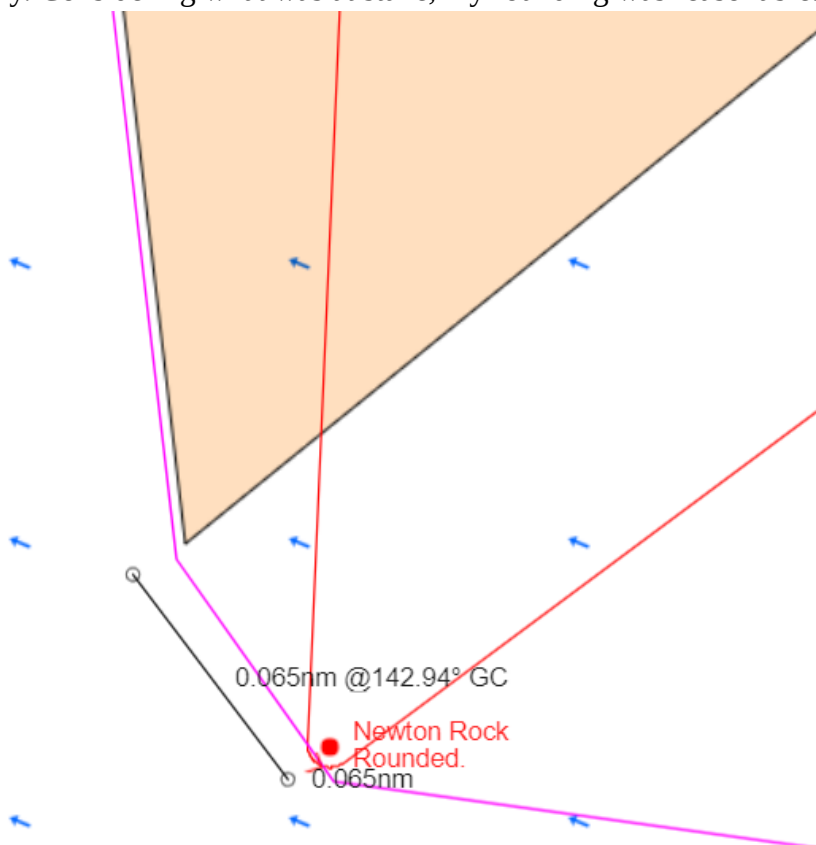


When the new weather forecast arrived, I could continue on my planned course towards Hog Island Buoy without any further gybe. From there it was a straight line beam reach to Popasquash Buoy and a run with a slight curve to the top mark at Rumstick Rock. It was not a sharp rounding, but I think I arrived in the leading group, although I can not give any details.

My pre-planning ended at Rumstick Rock, and for the remaining race I was less concentrated than during the first half. There were 3 more races that needed attention. The Lanzarote to Grenada and the Cape Verde to Colón races only received a superficial check, but the Newport Beach to Cabo San Lucas race was problematic. I had not set a start DC yet, and my router simply did not work. It suggested to proceed in very weak winds along the surf zone for an hour or two and then turn perpendicular to the coast, coincident with an instantaneous 90° wind shift and an increase in wind speed from 8 to 17 knots. To this day I have not understood what was going on. Eventually I started the race without routing advice.

During that time the boat in the Quahog Cup sailed  $\frac{1}{2}$  a mile from Rumstick Rk on port, tacked to starboard and curved on a constant TWA course to Northwest point on Patience Island. There I put it on a straight line course to the Jamestown Bridge mark and further to Newton Rock, leaving Dutch Island to port. Just by inspection, leaving that Island to port or starboard looked pretty even to me. In such a situation I usually decide to take the route with fewer course changes. The KISS principle.

The penultimate mark rounding at Newton Rock was a little tricky. One had to first round the Beavertail Point and bear off. After just 120 metres there was the actual mark, where the boat had to be put on a downwind course. It is all too easy to ruin an otherwise good race by executing the second course change too early. Considering what was at stake, my rounding was reasonable.



For the final two legs I was back on duty again. My strategy was to make one leg on starboard towards Brenton Reef and gybe on the layline to Castle Rock, because again the wind looked stronger on the Rhode Island side. The last gybe off Ford Adams was followed by a very short max VMG run to the Fort Adams mark and a max VMC leg to the finish line.

The deadline for submission of this report has expired more than 12 hours ago, so I better stop here.

rumskib