

REPORT ON LAKE ONTARIO 300 CHALLENGE 2021

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(There are good ships, and wood ships and ships that go to sea. But the best ships are friendships and may they ever be. – Irish toast anonymous to me but probably known to bonknhoot!)

I prepare detailed Logs and Screen Prints on **Satori's** participation in each of the SOL races for my own amusement and to keep me occupied while I am racing. They are too long to share with you and you may even find this too long. If you are bored with the Race details skip to the end for my summary of the Lessons Learned, which you SOLers may find of more interest. But you might miss your boat name!

I was introduced to SOL by participating in the 2020 Newport to Bermuda Race which I had raced in the past. I thought that at 81 my long distance racing was virtually over. SOL proved otherwise. I thought that this partnering with SOL arranged by **Tyger** and the N2B Organizers was brilliant. I came back thinking this could/should be done on Lake Ontario and contacted LOOR and they were just as enthusiastic. The result was this partnering of LOOR and SOL has been accomplished through the hard work of **Scooby** and **RainbowChaser**.

I was concerned that you international SOLers might find racing on Lake Ontario disappointing and not up to your open ocean standards! Well I have no concerns now! In the Chat Room this Race and its winds were described as challenging, tricky, complicated, tactically complex. As **bonknhoot** said in the Chat Room it was "Snakes and Ladders" or as one SOLer commented "Chutes and Ladders". As you SOLers know the six hour weather reports were unstable in their last hour and brought unexpected changes necessitating routing modifications. This was not a race where you could set Delayed Commands (DC's) and leave your computer and expect your boat to be where you intended. Missed roundings and BBQ's were frequent. You can bet the on-the-water navigators were busy and just as challenged.

109 SOL boats registered, including 11 Canadian boats. A great turnout. Thank you for the support. I am hoping for more Canadian participation in the future given that there are 21 yacht clubs on the north shore of Lake Ontario that support LOOR.

It certainly was not a photo finish with 15 minutes and 54 seconds separating the first three boats and the last of the Top Ten arrived 1 hour 3 minutes and 37 seconds after the Leader. As you know **SlideRule** of the USA was 1st, **bonknhoot** of the Netherlands was 2nd and **Sax747** of Italy was 3rd. We learned in the Chat Room that **SlideRule** and **bonknhoot** were both competitive dinghy sailors who had sailed at CORK (Canadian Olympic-training Regatta, Kingston), which is held east of the M9 Mark, an area favoured for its winds.

And yes, they are still competitive! **SlideRule** is moving up in the SYC Rankings with three recent 1st's and **bonknhoot** remains 2nd in SYC Rankings and **Sax747** is 3rd.

By the way, when you were at M9 if you had time to look to Port to the mouth of the St. Lawrence River you would have seen the start of an archipelago that straddles the Canada-US border commonly referred to as the 1000 Islands with its many parks and anchorages. A typical summer cruise of two

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weeks or more for Lake Ontario sailors is to head for the 1000 Islands. Our Club has an annual rendezvous there, sometimes at the Clayton Antique Boat Museum on the American side.

<https://www.abm.org/> The cruise usually involves a circumnavigation of the Lake with the winds dictating whether you go north shore or south shore. For **Shibumi**, my on-the-water boat, the wind always seems to be on the nose on my return no matter what shore!

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thousand_Islands

I really wanted **Satori** to do well in this Race. Given the stiff competition provided by the Top Ten boats I was pleased to finish 6th just behind **WRmirekd** of Poland who you SOLers know is No 1 in SYC Rankings, with 9 firsts and 1 second. Now is our chance as he will be cruising in the Greek Cyclades for the next month! Of course, he could distract us with pictures from the beaches!! He has promised us his MMSI. There were times approaching the M9 Mark when the SOL server had **Satori** temporarily alternating between 1st and 2nd place based on DTF which prompted **bonknhoot** to ask if I was using local knowledge. The truth is I was at the computer the whole race with just 2 and 4 hour power naps just as I would have been on-the-water!

Notwithstanding that this was said to be a “Chutes and Ladders” race due to the constant changes in the WX’s, which **bonknhoot** remarked provided plenty of opportunities for recovery, the actual finishing rankings did not change in the last 2 days of the Race.

A group of 7 boats got out into the lead early and only **ARMOROCH** fell out of this group finishing 11th. 23 hours into the Race using AIS on Qt, I did routing tests of the potential rounding times at the Ajax Weather Buoy for the first 10 boats, the then ranking being according to the SOL server based on DTF. The first 7 boats, with the exception of **ARMOROCH**, finished in the exact same order my test predicted for them rounding Ajax. At that point the predicted rounding of Ajax was that 46 minutes would separate the 7 boats and **SlideRule** would have a 30 minute lead over **bonknhoot**. So **bonknhoot** did reduce **SlideRule’s** lead by 22 minutes while **Satori** only reduced it by 15 minutes. **WRmirekd** was predicted to be 7 mins ahead of **Satori** at the Ajax Weather Buoy and actually finished the Race 8 mins ahead of **Satori**. So, except for the minute, **Satori** basically was able, for the next 2 days, to match race **WRmirekd**, who said the wind gods where not helping him. That for me is quite an accomplishment given the mistakes I made. One Qt late tack just before the M9 rounding probably cost **Satori** one or two minutes. That is in addition to the fact that I started one or two minutes late due to my starting DC being set for 16:15 UTC instead of 16:10! Fortunately, I was at the computer and wondered why **Satori** had not started with the other boats. So I had the potential to do better but I would have needed a gain of 7 minutes to overtake **WRmirekd** and change my placement to 5th place. Let me tell you **WRmirekd** does not need the help of the wind gods. We SOLers do when we are racing him!

I hope all of you SOLers were watching the on-the-water race on YBTracking. There were 7 Beneteau 36.7’s racing and 5 finished ahead of us on SOL. **Tonic**, who docks next to me at RCYC, finished 1st, July 13th at 04:15 EDT, 7 hrs 15 mins ahead of SOL’s **SlideRule**. **Air Force** was the last placed of the on-the-water 36.7’s finishing at 12:57 EDT behind **SlideRule** by 1 hr and 27 mins. **SlideRule** also finished ahead of on-the-water **Finale** by 43 minutes. SOL’s **Scooby**, who with **RainbowChaser** was responsible for establishing this SOL/LOOR partnering, was on **Katbird**, a Dufour 34, and they finished July 13th at 22:10 EDT, 6 hrs and 9 mins after **Satori**.

Lessons Learned and Reinforced

Do not forget in reading the following that I am still learning as a SOLer of only 12 months so these remarks cannot be taken as gospel! Feel free to disagree and disregard, particularly if you are finishing ahead of **Satori** on the SOL race course and now you will know why!

- I use QtvIm for routing and AGL for editing and conditioning the route, avoiding BBQ's and perfecting roundings. I often close Qt to save the Routes and I did have Java, Windows and internet interruptions during the Race.
- I did set Pathway courses to the Finish Line but I was never comfortable with the results of the Routings. DC's in these changing weather conditions for a long route never turn out as I expect. In addition, I find the Qt algorithms make too many compromises on longer routings that get me there but not necessarily ahead of the competition.
- Racing, I wanted to stay ahead of the competition both in the short-run and the long-run. As a result, I set the routings only to the next Mark and used AGL to manually insert DC's to create the rounding to a Compass Bearing taken by reference to the Qt Pathway Route to the Finish Line keeping VMG in mind. So the alarm was set and I was at the computer for each rounding and each WX. The privilege of retirement and an understanding wife who shows enthusiasm and interest in my SOL results!
- Notwithstanding, I find that Qt has **Satori** tacking or gybing just a few minutes too early or too late compared with the high ranking experienced SOLers. You know that we cannot spare a few minutes on SOL! Why? Is it settings? So, I keep an eye on them!
- I do need to improve my SOMP's rounding skill and I am participating in the Practice Races to do so. I AM ACTUALLY SHOCKED AT HOW FEW OF YOU SOLers COME OUT FOR THE PRACTICE RACES. You will be in the good company of the likes of **RainbowChaser**, **GREATSKUA**, **robert1**, **calmxy**, **Rod** to name a few. I guarantee your SOL results will improve if you do, particularly your mark roundings. This is a couple of hours of SOMP's sailing around the cans. Also great fun and camaraderie!
- I am still experimenting on how close I can round with an AGL edited rounding particularly when the SOL predictor line is hopping about with each crank. Which of the three hops shown on SOL is the AGL rounding? I am still preferring to conservatively lose time at each rounding rather than chance hitting the mark. **WRmirekd** showed us his rounding of the Burlington Weather Tower and he must have been within a pixel of the mark!
- I was focused on VMG and trying to be to windward of the competition for the options it presents. I keep the polar "butterfly" up at all times over the boat. I find it quite helpful visually.
- I have two screens now and I find the options it presents quite useful. SOL on one, AGL on the other; zoom in on one, zoom out on the other.....think of the options it could provide.
- I use the SOL weather slider a lot with the Red Dot on the predictor line not only showing me the future weather but the exact time of a tack or gybe or when the next WX will be. Because the last hour or so of the WX is less reliable you can bet that it will be just before a tack or gybe or even worse a series of tacks and gybes!
- There is a small group of us SOLers who collaborate and it helps all of us. Find a SOLer who is better than you and collaborate.

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- If you do not use AGL you should be considering using it.

I hope these thoughts are of interest. See you in the next race and in the Chat Room.

Do not forget to register for LOSHRS (Lake Ontario Short Handed Race Series – Race 4) which starts August 14th. This 100 mile race, the 4th of the Series, runs the west end of Lake Ontario: Port Credit Yacht Club to Burlington via Toronto Islands, then to the Niagara River entrance and back to PCYC. If you enjoyed the 300 you should enjoy the 100. You Canadian SOLers, bring another racer to SOL for this Race. 100 miles is a good starter race for a SOL introduction! <https://www.loor.ca/loshrs>

Stay safe,

John/Satori, July 14, 2021