

## **Sailonline's Shetland Race 2020 – Leg 1**

### Race Report

Wow!!! First podium! Glad to be sending my first report.

I would like to start by congratulating Sax747 for the excellent race and to be a tough opponent in the last few hours. Competence prevailed. Congratulazioni, mio caro!!

Briefly, I sail J-24s in the New York area and due to the pandemic, been landlocked since early March. Through an email from Sail Newport, I got introduced to SailOnline and decided to try it. My first regatta was the Quahog Race on March 22 that I sailed without knowing what I was doing but proudly finished in 159<sup>th</sup> place. It was fun and I was immediately hooked. At the end of the race signed-up for membership of the SailOnline Yacht Club.

In my next regatta, the Hobart to Sidney, I saw a Brazilian flag in one of the leading boats and decided to approach it. That was Batatabh, a long time SOLer. Through the chat and during the race we hooked-up and started exchanging messages. I was curious about routing programs and how to use them and found in Batatabh's skipper Adriano a patient and resourceful teacher. In a Zoom session he thought me how to use AGL and qtVLM and, voila... I finished that race in 17<sup>th</sup>!!!!

That was the beginning of the process that brought me here. Together Adriano and I started recruiting Brazilian SOLers, and were quickly joined by Nagajolokia, Guimazza and Rod67. Through a WhatsApp group we help each other to improving our skills. The group is open to all Brazilian SOLers. Just contact one of us through the chat while racing.

### **Shetland- Leg 1**

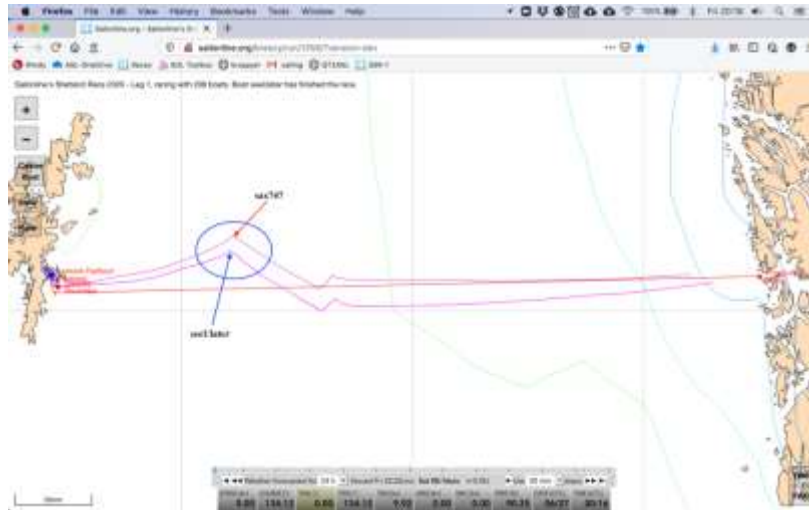
That was an interesting race. I can't talk about it without referring to the Newport to Bermuda sailed few days before. In that regatta, I attended some weather briefings put together by sailing clubs for IRL sailors planning to participate in the online version. A common theme in all briefings was that although a low-pressure area would be creating strong winds to the east, the long-term forecast was to be lighter but consistent winds in the west. And a statement by one of the forecasters stuck with me: "the shortest route between two points is a straight line".

The start of the race was exactly like that, with the routers pushing everybody to east, except for Midnightexpress, the leader of the double handed class that I was competing on. After a couple Wx changes, that were forcing us further west, I decided to go back to the "shortest route" and .... finished 9<sup>th</sup> place in my class!

Back to the Shetland - leg 1. It was déjà-vu but in a different angle. The routers were pushing everybody south, while the weather forecast analysis was showing again lighter but consistent winds on the North. Having followed the router for the first Wx change, I thought about the N2B experience and decided to stay in the middle.

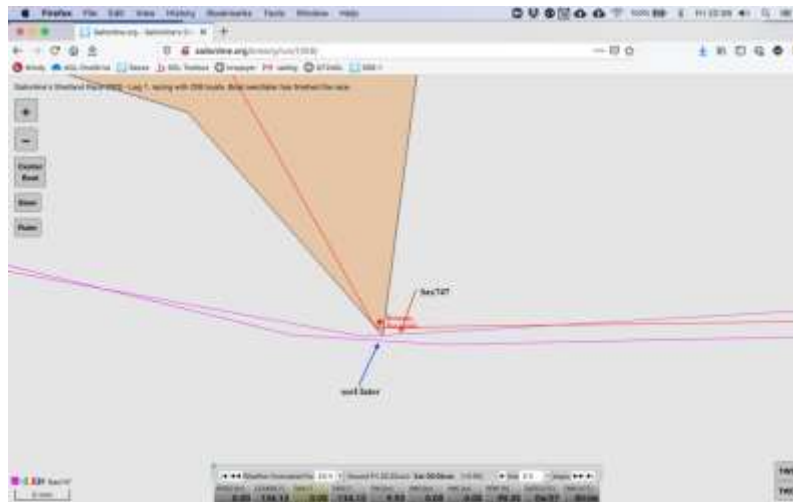
Slowly I saw seeUlater climbing the leaderboard and by late evening she was leading with Sax747 breathing in her stern.

From there you guys know what happened. Sax was always in the north side of the rhumb, and closing on seeUlater quite fast.

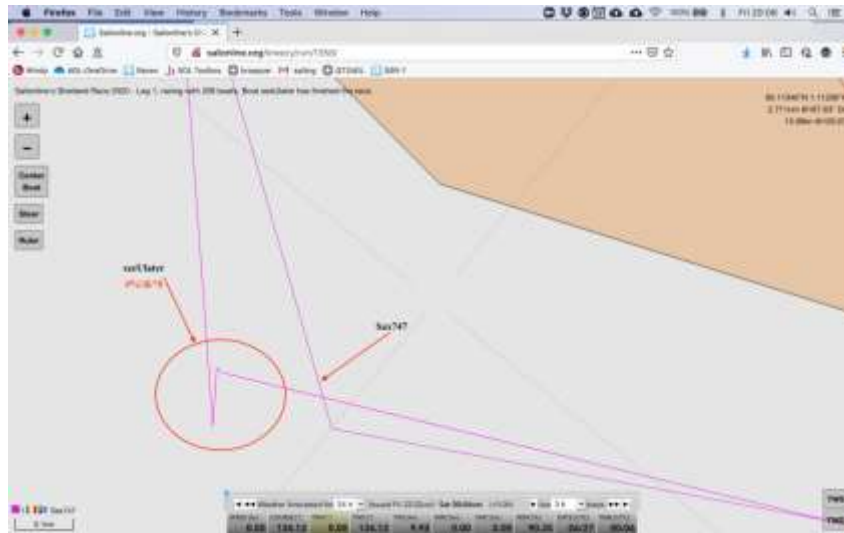


Despite of my attempts to cover her, I made a fatal mistake about 6 h before the finish by tacking too early. Sax747 got a better TWA and from that point onward was consistently 0.3 knots faster than seeUlater. Projecting the routes, we were to cross paths around Bressay and I set myself to start sailing SOTP from that point on.

Here you can see how masterfully Sax 747 did it. I was overtaken approximately 10 minutes before the mark and her helm was flawless



And then came the self-inflicted coup-de-grâce. Sailing SOTP, I tried to schedule two maneuvers in sequence to minimize a gybe performance loss. When calculating the heading to follow, I did it from North to South, and put the DC with a 180o error.... as this report is supposed to be suitable for a family audience, I will have to hold off on the swearing.



Even if I was able to correct the mistake quickly, the damage was done. My performance went to the mid 80s, allowing Sax747 to open a lead of 3 minutes in the short 3 miles distance to the finish line. She would have won anyway, thanks to the impeccable driving of her skipper. But I wish I could have been breathing in his neck as he did to mine.

All in, it was a great race where I could use the skills I've been honing in the last three months with the support of my mentor Adriano and my mate Pedro, the skipper of Nagajolokia. Kudos too to Guilherme, the skipper of Guimazza, and his incredible QT2AGL app that allow us to save precious minutes while moving through the routing process (before you guys say anything about it, the app is written in Portuguese, and of limited use to non-Portuguese speakers. Guilherme promised to translate it but he has been a bit busy IRL).

## **Shetland - Leg 2**

First day of IRL sailing in four months and mostly away from the screen, I wasn't participating in this leg but in the last minute my mentor helped me putting together enough of a route to cover my time away. Thank you Master!!! When I took control of seeUlater, it was a little late to go to the frontlines... 42<sup>st</sup> in the leg and 11<sup>th</sup> overall. My consolation? Batatabh finished 3 overall. Great to see my mentor leading the way.

Last words. Thank you SOLers! Even if I don't know most of you personally I feel as if we are a big family. SailOnLine and all of you are now part of my life. My mates!

Safe winds, and following seas,

Cheers,

Nelson Garcez/seeUlater