

Race Report

SSANZ Race Delta 2021

By Vida_Maldita

30 October 2021

This was a day race around the Waiheke Island in the Hauraki Gulf of New Zealand. For this race we pulled out our Sun Fast 3300 out of the shed.

Unfortunately, this race started soon after we finished the Gulf Run race in the Gulf of Mexico and due to the time zone, most Europeans were resting in bed or very tired which caused a small number of registered boats. Nevertheless, we had a small but competitive group of sailors battling for the top positions.

Most of the battle happened in the first part of the race, long downwind zig-zag from the starting line to Tarahiki. Some boats went North and missed the wind shift. WRmirekd, Greatskua, Kipper, Sax, a few Americans and myself went South and after a few Gybes we were clear ahead of the fleet.

I should note that SmokinJ and WRmirekd were the first to Gybe and Greatskua was the last. This was the last Gybe before heading up to Waiheke S. I believe that the race was mostly decided right there. In my opinion, Smokin and Mirek went a bit too early, and Kipper and the Spaniard overextended a little. Please, understand that the gain or loss in time, due to gybe timing, was very small, but that's how SailOnline is these days. Races are won by microscopic seconds.

This was not a sailing router race; this was old fashioned seat-of-the-pants navigation. Routers are not that precise in short legs such as these. And a bit of luck on the timing of the Gybe was also needed. I think Lady Luck gave me a hand there and Vida_Maldita gybe was spot on. Even with the differences in gybe timing, the race after Waiheke S was a horse race still very much undecided.

There was another important decision to make in this race. A tack on the upwind leg from Tarahiki to Waiheke NE. I believe Greatskua went early and

opened the door for me to pass him. Kipper and Sailj29 were a hair late in tacking and overshot the lay line.

After Waiheke NE, the race could be sailed in straight lines till the end. Except that I was well rested and eager to win, so Vida_Maldita sailed slightly on an arc from Waiheke NE to Waiheke Island to take advantage of the polar curves. It paid off nicely and by the time we rounded Waiheke Island the server was placing me ahead, Greatskua in second followed by Kipper. I must note that it was dawn in Spain and Greatskua was likely very tired and just pointed his boat straight to the mark. So is SailOnline, sometimes the time of the race doesn't help. Long races are not an issue because it evens out for everyone, but in short races it helps when the race happens during your waking hours.

After rounding Waiheke Island, it was a straight line to the finish line about 9.6 nm in a beam-reach. Since I was ahead, the natural tactic is to place your boat between the opponent and the finish line so that he wouldn't be able to pass. Except that I had to cover two boats going to two different points. Greatskua was pointing to the southern end of the finish line and Kipper was pointing to the northern end. I started the leg by pointing to the middle of the line and sort of covering both boats. But this is a bad tactic. It usually means a second place.

So, what to do? After a close observation of the polar curves, it was clear the wind was shifting ever so slightly left and we would be sailing closer to the wind as we are getting near the finishing line. And since there was a bit more pressure on the right side of the leg, I should be sailing toward the northern end of the finish line. So, I needed to go up 2 degrees. Because my lead was so small, I didn't want to lose anything due to performance loss, so I changed the direction in steps of 0.1 degrees until Vida_Maldita was heading to the pin.

At the end, it was Vida_Maldita with the gold, GREATSKUA 10 seconds behind and Kipper only 1 second behind the Spaniard. I told you that day races are won or lost by seconds.

Thanks for the behind-scenes work of the SailOnline administration.

Sincerely,

Antonio Ferrer (Vida_Maldita)