Round Robben Island 2021

The 2021 Round Robben Island Sprint started at a perfect time for racing here on the East Coast of the U.S. A start after coffee in the morning and finish in time to fulfill evening duties.
The race itself was fairly straightforward. Winds were 18-20 knots from the NNW.
The crew of Brewman managed to get to the start and cross the line on time – no mean feat recently…

During the first leg to Robben North, there was a 5 or 6 degree wind shift to the north which dictated starting on port tack. Out tactician called the layline to the mark almost perfectly, but a wide turn put Brewman back in 11th or 12th position. Brewman sailed the reach to Robben West on the rhumbline. We watched a couple of competitors drift slightly south of the rhumbline, but the tactic didn't pay off for them.
The SOL server favored Brewman with a nice rounding and then came the decision to go north or south of Robben Island. North looked shorter, and south didn't seem to have an advantage on the polar chart, so north we went. Got a little nervous as Brewman dropped to the mid-teens in fleet standings as the southern route boats sped down to Robben Island. Their route back up to the Bloubergstrand mark was enough upwind that the lead northern boats overhauled them.

Another nice rounding at Bloubergstrand and a quick gybe onto starboard for the run down to the Milnerton Beach Mark – Brewman had now moved into the top 5, but there was very little difference between the boats and standing often was more dependent on server jumps than anything else. I considered gybing back early in order to set up for a tight rounding at Millerton, but decided that there would be too much performance loss with two course changes, so all was dependent on a tight rounding.

The server jump at the mark put Brewman exactly adjacent to the mark.
Do I click the course change and risk turning early???
If I wait the 10 seconds for the next jump, I'll likely finish out of the top 5 or maybe 10…
I couldn't stand it. Clicked and hoped…
After the server jump, "Rounded" appeared below the mark!!!!
Then a drag race to the finish with Brew in 3rd, then 1st, then 2nd, then 1st…
When the spray settled, Brewman reached the finish a mere 7 seconds ahead of bonknhoot for my first ever SOL win after 7 years of practice!

Brewman/November 2021