

San Francisco to New York 2022

Report and thoughts – Renegade June 9th 2022

At the start of this epic race, I pondered attempting the Amazon via the Panama Canal as someone did on the last running and I wondered aloud in the chat would anyone try that this time. Thinking I might.... but I didn't.

I broke this race into 3 sections.

- 1: The Pacific to Cape Horn. (South not west!)
- 2: Cape Horn to Recife (Compression zone)
- 3: North Atlantic and getting to NYC. (Mystery leg – It will happen here)

I was successful in two of the legs and decent in the third. Result a P7, which is a magnificent result in this race. I typically don't take screenshots during a race to use in reports, but I recall a few early chats.

Notably, Pit8008 starting 5 minutes late and making the prediction that the race would be won in the Atlantic, but it could be lost in the Pacific. He got his 5 minutes back and was absolutely right. I kept that in the back of my head the rest of the race.

Second, I don't recall the day, but within a few of the start, wsguerin noticed and mentioned Renegade had taken a small lead in the center fleet of about 14 NM when I checked, but it was not reflected in the rankings due to East boats holding the higher rankings. I chatted back what to do, and he said, 'Keep the nose out front'. Solid advice and I tried that the rest of the race.

I can only say by some luck and neglect I had nosed out front of the central boats. I believe this was because I had only been checking Wx's once or twice a day in the early days. Which is typical of my SOLing. The captain doesn't like too much attention on deck as it's disruptive to tranquility and so typically I will set an overall strategy and make updates when I am at work only. Which for me is midway through the 10:30 Wx, then catch the 16:30 Wx but typically an hour or two late, depending on the day, and then going offline until the next day during summer because the 22:30 Wx happens after I leave work except in the winter when the clocks switch. So, my SOLing suffers a bit more in Q2 and Q3 because of this. Anyway, long way to go to say I had been neglectful and missed QT sending the fleet East – West – East and playing with the routes.

Lastly, I recall a strong Italian presence in the west and much chatter about cheese and wine luring boats to follow.

Now, my overall strategy.

In the previous running of the SF-NYC I had taken the west route and did well but got burned in the S. Pacific approaching Cape Horn. So, this time there was no way I was going to take a West route at all no matter what. Even though QT's long predictions kept insisting West was best. I have simply seen that the route depends on high rolling roaring 40's storms and catching them just right. Having been SOLing since 2011 I have played with those storms a lot and have almost never got them right. Often, I am tossed off the back, sent roller-coasting over a long distance, or having them move too slow and ride it slowly like a surfing wave out front. This meant I was not going to count on them to carry Renegade to the Horn.

Instead, I stubbornly forced QT to give me a route of about 2-3 days in a general South-ish direction by dropping a mark and shifting it further as I approached. I also tried to look for where the winds would be good in the next 2 days to try and sail well. This was Leg 1 to the Horn and in the end a magic carpet showed up and led me around the horn in first. I had also started to check the route in the evening with notice to the captain that I was leading and thus had to make more effort. Which included an early morning check at Cape Horn. CollegeFund was close and making me nervous, but our strategies varied slightly after and we separated. More challengers filled in the gap fast.

Leg 2 was going to be different. SCARABOCCHIO predicted he would catch up by Recife, and I believed him because as an ocean SOLer myself I have done that as well, most recently in the Tokyo to SF race. I was also nervous because a massive fleet reset occurred off Rio last running. So, I was not surprised that he was very close at Recife. I thought, GULP, they are coming and I'm the fox in this hunt. The South Atlantic zone is all about massive fleet compression and I managed to keep out front. Could not escape the fleet with no option to get ahead. I attempted to cover boats a bit west and east if either group got more of an advantage. Stressful days as it seemed I always came on deck to find Renegade was on a worse angle than challengers, but by some luck I managed a lead at Recife. Too bad I was not equipped with foils.

Leg 3 the big mystery for me. This is where the race would be won/lost. I had planned to let QT show me what might be a good route but was opting for a middle more north route then following the coast to the Caribbean. I noticed nordee and rafa heading NE early to take a chance on that route being better. I positioned more west but started to follow hoping that my extra western distance would shield me a bit from a potential advantage that might develop. It didn't as one morning I got on deck to find Renegade had finally been soundly passed over night. It had been some weeks of P1 sailing and I had loved the thrill of being the fox for so long. In the remaining distance I didn't see much chance of catching up again unless the East coast US tropical storm reset things.

Kudos and congratulations to rafa, nordee, SCARABOCCHIO for sailing the best N. Atlantic routes and taking the podium spots. Along with the rest who made this a very special race for Renegade. I very much look forward to reading the reports.

See you later!

David / Renegade SRC

