

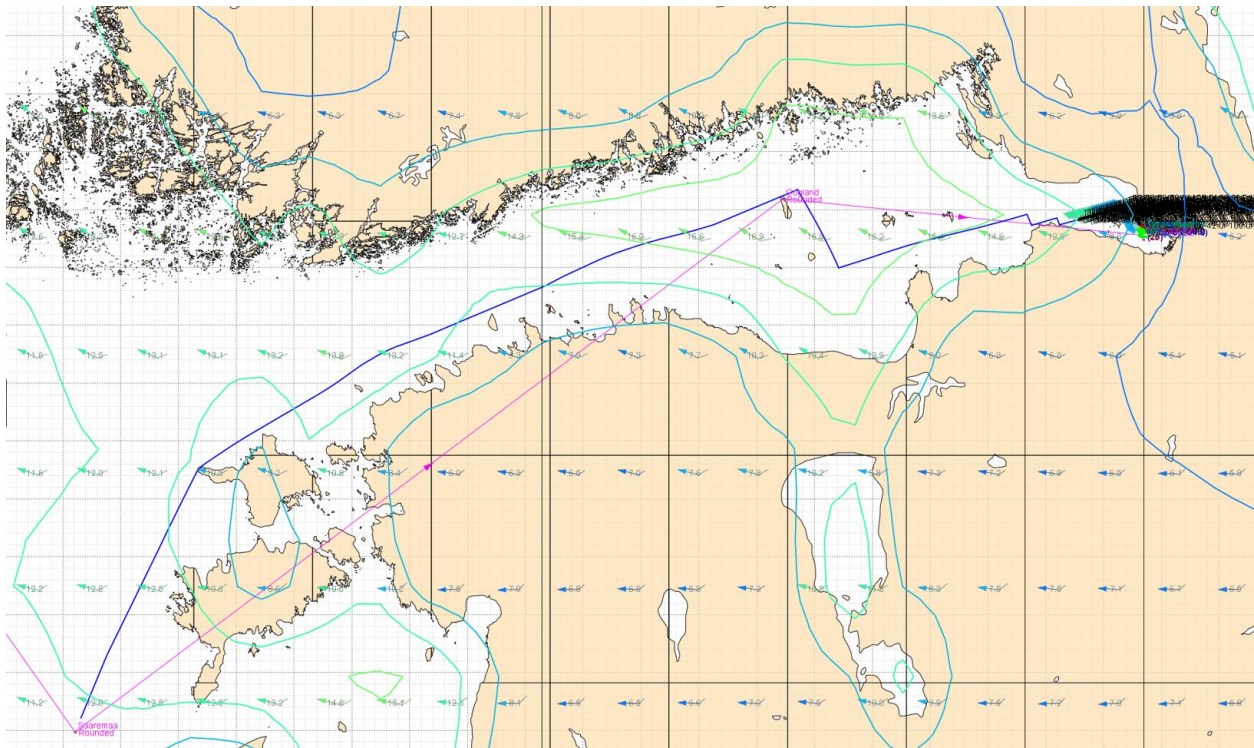
Stockholm to St. Petersburg Race

Race Report by "SlideRule"

Race Philosophy

Most of races of this type are very close with very small things making the final difference. In each race I consider when to optimize (low or no risk) and when to differentiate to try for a gain or pass. This was an interesting race that required both precision, patience, consistency, and discipline. Risk taking and differentiation never really had a place in this race because of the consistency of the weather forecasts and the extended reaching legs until the last part of the race. The course, wind direction, and boat selection meant that the routing and DC's needed to be point to point optimal solution sets.

Unfortunately for the SOP crowd, VMC never worked, and a good router was needed to do good job of determining the near optimum course between marks. I did see many boats head off temporarily on lower hotter VMC angles in the short run, but they had to come back to the mark at slower angles. The router determined when to get the maximum value out of the lower angles when there was more wind or a gradual wind shift.

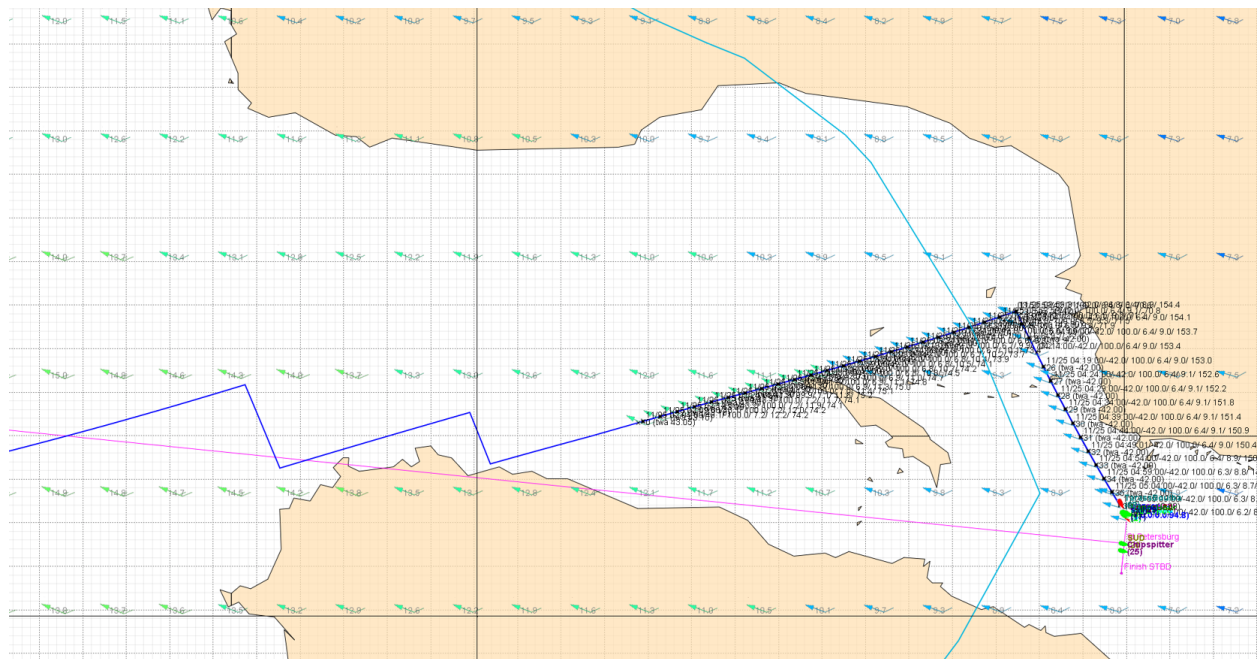


Optimum Solutions

For the first half of the race "SlideRule" stuck to near optimum LT solutions to each mark or in some cases the relevant headland. This means giving up the lead and playing a longer game. It also produced a pack of boats that were very close together on a theoretical optimum. I refer to this group as the "usual suspects", you know who you are Rico, Bonk, Mirek, Pitt, Dingo, Med, and others who are using good routing programs to get to optimum courses. The reach legs called for generating optimum instruction sets between the boat and the next mark.

No Errors

I was still smarting from a finishing error that kept both John (Dingo) and me off the podium in the Raja Muda so I was also intent on not making mistakes like hitting a headland or missing a mark. Case in point, Mirek had a very slight lead over Rico and Slide, at the first headland and “scraped” for a brief BBQ giving the lead to Slide followed by Rico. Apparently, even a clean solution can move incrementally particularly when turning or tacking when the instructions are processed and produce a missed mark or a BBQ. The smart money sets an alarm and checks the mark and headland roundings. Prompt routings after each weather update is also a success factor. In some long ocean races you can miss a weather update without an enormous cost and all of us have to do it for work or IRL sailing or some other reason, but you always lose some ground, and the leaders are so competitive that you can’t usually make up the lost distance and time.



Precision

The last part of the race after rounding Gogland was about tacking to stay in the maximum average wind field throughout the rest of the race. Any router solution needed to be edited to use the geography to reduce tacks and therefore performance loss. Most of the tacks were VMG or near VMG, with an occasional small component of “wally” to get more leverage from the next small shift. Several islands were obstacles to the optimum course. Rico has a very small lead on me at Gogland, but I suspect it was also near “sleep” time in Europe. When you’re sleeping and I suspect that several of you of NEVER sleeping, you usually need to be more conservative about mark roundings and land obstacles. You also can’t match race or cover opponents to prevent a pass. I might be wrong, but I could tell Rico was sleeping and I was able to get Slide differentiated into higher average wind for the remainder of the race and cut several obstacles at a very low margin of error.

As usual, credit to Dingo for being my “off watch partner” on the opposite side of the globe so that we don’t become obsessive insomniacs. John is certainly one of the most skilled navigators on SOL and has selflessly taught me a wealth of knowledge while we covered off watch updates for each other in this and other races.

Lastly an acknowledgement that is a group of SOLers, The Usual Suspects who are permanently loaded into my AIS list, who are extraordinarily skilled and sail near perfect races, raising the bar very high, and making it very satisfying to occasionally win a race! Special recognition to Ricotina and Pit8008 for sailing extremely well and making me sail my best race!

Real Slide Rule is based in Fort Lauderdale for the SORC Islands in the Stream series this winter, so on occasion I will miss some of my favorite races or be missing or inconsistent with updates.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c_d3S3XeP0Q

Regards;

Scott > “SlideRule”