

Around Great Britain

Race Report from SlideRule

I find this to be one of the most interesting races that we do! This is a real race that is held every four years by the RORC, last raced in 2022 IRL. The Brits consider this race the ultimate challenge, just short of racing in the Vendee Globe because of the constant navigation challenges. It eclipses even the Fastnet Race in terms of difficulty, tidal gates, headlands, and extreme variation in weather conditions. The race course creates lots of “opportunities”. Most of the headlands have fairly extreme tidal gates that add a tremendous navigational challenge and the diverse weather and fatigue add to the difficulty. The first part is like the Fastnet Race and I was the navigator on EH01 in the Fastnet Race two years ago so the beat out the Solent, crossing the overfalls, and the close reach across the Irish Sea passing Fastnet Rock brought back memories for me.

Winning an SOL race is not quite like an IRL race, but extremely challenging with the level of focus and the precision of the top competitors. I started SlideRule SOP, but quickly changed over to my routing software running qtVLM to generate DC's. Every routing had to be adjusted to optimize turns, maximize use of the available wind gradient. There were plenty of “Wally” tacks and gybes to get to the shift of bend of the wind around a headland of from the West to East weather systems. It was also necessary to monitor some of the roundings, as the build-up in server error variance could put you on the shore during a crucial rounding which happened to several key competitors. I did my very best to “lose” the race at the end, when I “gybed” instead of “tacked” to cover Freyja (a middle of the night befuddlement) which is yet another learning! I was lucky to have enough time, angle, and wind gradient to recover from my poor execution, which is normally fatal in an SOL race.

Several key competitors were IRL sailing! I know that Mirek (sailing in Greece > sounds good to me) and Pit (racing on Rikki in MHOR > congrats on 3rd). Several competitors have extreme precision that exceeds my skill when they're fully invested in racing. However, it's fun to have competitors that both humble and teach you to raise your standards of navigation discipline. Back in the real world Slide Rule, just made the North Victory List for winning Class B in the Edgartown Race Week Round the Island Race... but the real highlight was we met PIT at the party (Matthew)? I would enjoy meeting any other SOLer's in real life (or even go sailing) when the opportunity presents. Thanks as always to my Aussie, off watch partner Dingo (John) for middle of the night updates!!

Respectfully submitted;

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