

Finland – Sweden Archipelago Raid 2023

brewman

First off, kudos to CollegeFund for not only winning this race, but leading from the first mark to the finish. Without his guiding trail, brewman would have missed the roundings at Yttre Hamnskar and Yttre Korso through sheer inatentiveness.

Kudos also to Speedwagon for a beautifully sailed race, keeping the pressure on throughout.

The Raid is traditionally a race of attrition. If one can keep their boat moving, they stand a chance of a decent finish. Easier said than done, considering the innumerable islands and mark roundings along the unending race course...

It was with this attitude I started the race at 6:00pm local time. At the helm for a few hours, then plotted hopeful DC's for the night watch as I slept. Normally upon awakening brewman is found with the night watch celebrating on the beach. However, this year they decided to actually stay afloat and I found the boat among the top 20 in the morning, about halfway from the start to the first mark at Dragedet. Having no commitments that day allowed continual hand steering throughout the day with only one mishap: just missed the mark at Stora Vanskar, but quickly recovered and rounded.

Retired for a full night's sleep in about 10th place after again setting wishful DC's to round Vittre Korso and Jungfrun as well as threading through all the islands there. Again, I fully expected upon awakening to find brewman's night watch celebrating on one of Smo's haunts along the way.

To my unending surprise, I again found brewman afloat and undamaged in the morning. I reclaimed the helm and piloted brewman through the next day, moving slowly up the rankings as competitors BBQ'ed or otherwise went astray. At Holma, brewman had eased into 3rd place behind College Fund and Speedwagon. During the upwind leg from Homa to Korpo, Speedwagon took a more northerly route through the islands and when the wind shifted somewhat to the west, brewman was lifted into 2nd place.

It was about midnight local time as brewman rounded Korpo, and any thought of sleep had to be shelved. The disadvantage of a podium position became glaringly apparent: to maintain podium position in this neighborhood, sleep and DC's are out of the question. So began my first non-alcohol induced all-nighter since college.

College Fund, brewman, and Speedwagon maintained 1, 2, 3 position all through the night, with about 3 miles between each. I finally got a little sleep during the 30 mile leg from Asko to the final mark, Skagard. All 3 boats made the turn and headed for the finish. Things looked settled until about a quarter way down the final leg, Speedwagon noticed that with no change in the boats' relative position, he had moved into 2nd place. Brewman had skimmed just inside the mark and had to return to round.

Fortunately, the next bunch of boats, GREATSKUA, rso, & brellis were over an hour back, so there was time to round while only slipping to 3rd place.

Thanks(?) to Smo and JakeS for designing this "nightmare and great adventure" as it truly qualified as both!!!