

LAKE PEIPUS ICE RACE 2024

I usually like my chances to finish in the Top 10 in the short race weekend races. The field is smaller and some of the best SOLers skip these races.

For years, conditions permitting my general strategy has been to point straight at the roundings and execute the turns by setting a wake-up DC one minute prior to the turn, the turning DC about 15 seconds past the mark, and closely watching the countdown clock to confirm it's working correctly. In some races I might manually execute the turns a few seconds before my DC, but not in this race - at 50 knots, if the commands execute a few tenths of a second early I'll short the mark. So, in this race I watched a few precious seconds tick at each rounding, just to be sure.

Over the years I've learned that simply pointing at the marks doesn't get you to the finish line fastest, even if you make good turns.

At the start, I noticed several boats pointed a few degrees North of Skamja in an effort to gain a few seconds via better TWA, so I followed suit. In typical fashion, where some boats pushed that envelope more I chose a more conservative push, maybe just a degree or two.

After the Skamja rounding, I was briefly in the lead and chose a similar push, this time 1 or 2 degrees West of straight at Piirissaar. By now, I was anticipating the same possibility for the final leg back to Lohusuu. Again, after the turn I was briefly in the lead - but sassy63 chose a tighter, straighter line towards Lohusuu. For that entire finishing leg, I thought I had a chance to catch sassy with slightly faster TWA, but I became worried that ITA210 and Pit would come sweeping in from my west and overtake me. I finally caught sassy with mere seconds to go in the race, with ITA210 and Pit only a second or two behind us. What a finish!

brellis / January 2024!