

A TALE OF 2 HOBARTS

Yes SOLers, it's a Boxing Day 2 for 1 special with two classic Down Under Events that have attracted a global fleet of navigational insomniacs. I arrive with my trusty nav slide rule in hand with a bad case of jet lag off a 27 hour Boston to Sydney flight of coughing, hacking passengers just hoping that I haven't caught the latest pandemic variant. I just look for the tallest mast in the yacht basin to find my Maxi 100!

Hobart Chapter One > The Tasman Double (aka Sydney to Hobart)

The forecast for the race is anyone's guess based on the position and movement of an amorphous ridge of low pressure wandering aimlessly across the racecourse. The GFS and the European models were consistently/inconsistent producing entirely different race strategies in the days leading up to the race. Dingo and I *confabricated* (not a real word) a strategy to use the GFS SOL in the short term and the European model for the longer term as a predictive GRIB and differentiator in this situation. Sometimes SOL can be a navigator's "white board" for desperately creative thought. Dingo went even more Euro than Slide at the start as I used a 12-hour consensus intersection of the isochrone optima from the GFS and the Euro. This put John further west, plus he missed a key weather for a surprise 80 kt squall to resecure his real boat, highlighting the ongoing weather weirdness. SlideRule caught a good track south near, but not quite in the effective lead.

All I can say is that a couple key competitors on the American Team had too much spiced eggnog at their holiday parties because they had edged ahead...and in the light of the dawning day they were just slightly behind, not mentioning them by name because they know who they are... Many a race has been lost at 3AM in both IRL and SOL. So Mirek and Slide ended up indeterminately head to head for the predicted lead at the finish. Mirek tacked 90 seconds earlier and Slide woulda, coulda, shoulda covered on the last shift inside with shorter distance to the finish and but with Slide slightly more outside with a good pressure and angle (trust the router?). To be honest, both the router and I thought Slide was going to catch him, visions of winning even a virtual Sydney Hobart danced in my brain, I had the better pressure gradient, I had the better angle, I had the better SOG, VMC, blah.. blah. However, it's never over until it's over, Mirek was still a quarter mile ahead at Cape Raoul turning up into storm bay! Freyja called it the Mirek Miracle, how does he do that!! Of course, he executed the finish up the Derwent perfectly, so it was runner-up, almost award for SlideRule.

But wait, we then got to watch "live" the real thing in a nail biter finish between Andoo Commanche and Law Connect. It was an incredible spectacle with Law Connect compressing a 3-mile lead deficit in Storm Bay, then overtaking in the River Derwent and then trading the lead 3 or 4 times in the last mile to the finish to prevail...unbelievable! Clearly Andoo Commanche could have used Mirek at the helm!

Hobart Chapter 2 "the West Coaster" Melbourne to Hobart

This was a different level of effort altogether for the SlideRule campaign with not a lot of planning or thought, entering at the race last minute because I was already doing updates for S2H anyway, no off-watch partner for the late-night updates, because it was too much to ask Dingo as he wasn't entered. I straight-lined the buoys in the harbor start with margin for turns and routed from ORCV B to around the bend of Tasmania. I put in TWA's as DC's because the boat would be sailing and tacking unattended, then went to sleep. This race was just one tack onto a 300 mile layline to Tasmania and one final gybe at

the bottom of Tasmania. Usually nothing good happens when you tack on a layline, particularly one this long, with too much time for things to change. Well, we'll just call it what it was...shit luck! SlideRule tacked in the dark of night on autopilot while the navigator slept through the critical WX and still somehow found the right lane. At the bar after just two drinks, I would probably tell you that I used Chaos Theory to determine my tacking time. After that it was a matter of fending off the pesky Pole and the intrepid Spaniard, among other contenders which meant no more sleep for Slide!

A Brief Philosophical Digression

These two races provide a unique opportunity to reflect on the emotional chasm between finishing first or second in a race, particularly a legendary real race. We could see the elation and the disappointment on the faces of the respective crews of Law Connect and Andoo Commanche. Some people claim that fourth (just off the podium) is the worst place to finish in a race setting aside the ultimate humiliation of the Cook's Trophy (last place). I contend that the relative disappointment between 1st and 2nd is the largest and inversely proportional to the smallness of the margin. I've finished barely 2nd IRL many times, and fortunately I've finished 1st just enough times to know the difference. A couple years ago I finished "Second" in Class A by 3 seconds in a big local race that I won the prior year to a outstanding competitor. When a well-meaning friend congratulated me after the race on 2nd place, my thoughtless response was "I'll get over it!" Second is the most disappointing place to finish a race, it's the "almost", often the untold story that if told would turn into whining. However, you learn the most from a second place after the regrets turn to reflection, it motivates you, and brings you back determined to try even harder. It's unfinished business!

Respectfully submitted;

Slide Rule



WTF moment on Andoo Commanche!



“Did that just happen” on Law Connect



Hyannis skipper Roger Sturgeon's Rosebud captured the overall prize at the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race in Australia on Friday. *Cape Cod Times*

My friend Roger Sturgeon from our won the Tattersale Cup in 2007 as the “under dingo”!