

Kremenchuk Ice Race 2024

Another ice race. Considering the super result made in the Lake Peipus I was fully aware that I already used my lucky ticket so it would be another race to enjoy and not more but... 😊

For this race I decided to have an aggressive start so I set my first DC with only 1 second of delay to the official start time. From the very beginning I saw that Brandy and Sax were going really well (as usual) together with all the other super SOLers like Pit, Kipper, Mirek, Freyja, Sassy, Rafa and all the others coming strong. For this race the wind was very low and with a tendency to shift to the left so we all went for some gain keeping a little on the right. Rounding marks required the usual patience to wait for the boat to be fully clear of the mark but with clear need to shorten as much as possible the route. The first mark went quite well. Now the fleet had to pass close to shore but not too much since in this race a small BBQ means going from the top 10 to the top 100, just a 0 but it makes quite a difference. Reaching the second mark I was well in the top 10, now I had to decide how to reach the finish, left or right? One side had a little more wind while the other was better for the shift of the wind. I heard several times that in SOL it's better to go for the angle so I went for the stronger wind!!! I rounded the mark with some margin to keep clear from the mark and I think it was worth it since the great Kipper missed the mark by a few inches, what a pity! I noticed that others rounded the mark with quite a fat margin like Sax (mannaggia mannaggia!!!). Now I was first of the Italian squadron and in the middle of all the great SOLers. WOW what a nice feeling to be together with SOLers that usually in the ocean races are well above my horizon!!! Everything was going fine until Brandy and Sax decided to gybe, here I panicked! If so clever SOLers gybe does it mean the other side it's better? But Pit, Mirek, Freyja, Rafa, Sassy and Co. are here... Dilemma dilemma dilemma, mumble mumble. At a certain point Brandy and Sax were even leading the fleet... OK, fair. I keep this side and they go the other way so we have more chances for the Italian team. So I went on with the strong feeling of being on the wrong side of the course. Layline came and then I gybed with some margin so as not to miss the finish line. Brandy and Sax were well ahead, how nice... Approaching the finish line the margin of Brandy and Sax disappeared and somehow I came back in a "fair position". In SOL like in irl sailing everything can happen before the finish so I kept focus on crossing the line as best as I could and virtually pushing my boat with all the others close to me. A last gybe before the line and... I stopped breathing for some time not believing I could have done it. Waiting for the final update and confirmation.

And finally the ranking came clear:

I WON MY FIRST EVER RACE IN SOL!!!

Fantastic! Now I have to wait another 12 years for the next... 😞

Mirek, Freyja, Pit, Sassy, Rafa came all in a flash together with the rest of the fleet. Later when I checked the timings I saw I had an incredible 6 sec margin on Mirek and that Freyja crossed the line with the same time of Pit. Really a strange race!!! An Italian that hates cold winning the race and 2 boats with the same time. And Brellis? I missed you in the top group!

Final message to all the humble SOLers like me:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4An1BrG2u_4