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## Southampton to Punta del Este 2024 WOW, WHAT A RACE!

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I don't remember such a Team Italy result: a few tricolor podiums yes but four boats in the top four places and a fifth in ninth place is something incredible.

Eight Italian boats started from Southampton and six crossed the finish line in Punta del Este in the top 23.

I would divide the race into three sections, "Southampton-Dakar," "Crossing to Brazil," and "Final Tract."

The first section was very easy to plan: in fact, most of the boats followed the classic route that includes a passage between the Canary Islands and a subsequent route along the west coast of Africa, more or less to Dakar.

Sailing the second sector in a southwesterly direction, I began to study the weather evolution more carefully, comparing possible routes and placing WPs at the points I considered crucial.

As we approached Brazil, with the succession of WXs, the trend confirmed the expected route further east, offshore, with very few routes below the coast of Brazil.

The third sector was decisive for the outcome of the race: as we approached the Brazilian coast, the option of a westerly route became more and more insistent and, as a result, a decision had to be made ...

The router, which we know is a useful but not decisive tool, said WEST however the routes in the previous days were all stable on the EAST option.

The fleet was thus divided, Freyja, bonknhoot, StingFI, Siaki and many many other boats decided for the west option and we were surprisingly few left following the east one.

My certainties began to waver, urgent advice was needed: who better to solve the problem than "master" Prof. ita10267?

We discussed a lot and stalled for a few WX before deciding that the original plan was the best, a choice later confirmed also by Kipper, Dingo and SlideRule.

A few days later, the gap to the leaders grew to more than 400 nautical miles, and with it also grew my doubt that I had made the wrong choice.

Weather developments, however, increasingly confirmed that the east course was the right one: instability under the coast of Brazil shifted and created blue bubbles that made it difficult to study a viable west course.

WX after WX the gap gradually narrowed and so, in addition to recovering the 400 miles lost, we arrived at the finish line with about 150 miles to spare.

Congrats to all, it was a beautiful race and I learned a lot!

Special applause for my fantastic teammates ita10267, Mediterranean, Sax747, aner59 and Siaki!

Carlo Alberto (SCARABOCCHIO)