

Hobart Race Report

SlideRule

This was the first win for SlideRule in almost exactly a year since the West Coaster last year, and notably a brides maid finish against Mirek in last year's Hobart which left me feeling like the crew on Commanche. A Sydney Hobart is a bucket list thing for me that probably won't ever get a check mark. It was a pleasure to squeak out a win in this virtual edition. It was sad to hear the tragic news from the actual race about two deaths, not to mention three dismastings, and numerous retirements in a very difficult and challenging actual race. As someone said in the chat our race was much safer and drier! I highly recommend watching the Law Connect Live Stream, particularly the start.

I thought this one would also go to CriticalHippo, who's been on fire. He hugged the coast exiting Sydney Harbor and it seemed to work for him. My router suggested a line of isochrone optima that eased offshore, staying in the maximum wind. Slide Rule was never in first geometrically, but was on the leading edge of the fleet and making south in the strongest available breeze down the coast, and then gybing west through the fastest transition area coming from the front. Then it was power reaching in what in real life must have been a horrific sea state across the Bass Strait, and then the router brought us disturbingly close to the lee of Tasmania. I would have doubted that strategy on the real race course, but for SOL you have to believe the router most of the time.

In my morning 10:00 GMT, I woke up to a very close race with Critical Hippo about 3 hundredths ahead and Dingo just 2 hundredths behind me rounding Tasman Island and starting a tacking duel up to Hobart. Hippo lead the way to Cape Raoul, but stayed out in the pressure while Slide and Dingo tacked to the shore into the persistent header immediately. When we crossed Slide had picked up 3 or 4 hundredths, just enough to take the lead with Dingo just behind Hippo by maybe a hundredth or so.

After that it was a matter of not bumping into any land with safe tacking margins while hugging the east side as the wind slowly rotated and there was also a slight wind gradient advantage. The tacking had to be balanced against fairly significant performance loss (~94%) on each tack, so it had to be executed with as few tacks as possible.

I enjoyed the race and the extremely close competition, and was fortunate to win this one. My sailing friend and strategy partner Dingo was a very close second, mere seconds and hundredths back. CriticalHippo was a very close third, followed by a crowd of the usual suspects only minutes behind.

I can't help but wonder what will be the fallout from the tragedy in the real Hobart race, considering the sinkings in this years Bermuda Race, and also the carnage in the most recent Fastnet Race. We'll see!

Submitted by SlideRule (Scott)

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