

Dondra to Toamasina by Balloon – Report

The balloon and its notorious polar had given me some serious headaches in previous balloon races. The thing was that I got stuck in the next to the finish line for a significant period of time, just watching the competitors slowly drift past me towards the finish. So obviously I wanted to avoid that this time, so I actually studied what the wind was maybe doing close to Madagascar. In my opinion it seemed fairly clear that the final approach had to be made from North to South. This dictated my strategy for the whole race, I wanted to go more or less straight west or even with a slight northerly bend on my course.

I was surprised that there were so few others who chose this option. During the race I also started to think in a slightly different mode. Previously I had only thought about which direction I would want to go, now I also started paying attention to how fast I wanted to go. In some cases, I did not want to go too fast but rather wait a bit for the wind at my target area to reach favourable direction and strength. With the knowledge of how things turned out, I should have gone even slightly more north.

I think the balloon is a fun "boat", for a change and not to be taken too seriously.

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