

Race report for Melbourne Osaka Cup Double-Handed Yacht Race 2025

by marman

The first couple of days in the race were fairly straightforward, just timing the tacking to the wind shifts and staying in reasonable good wind. So when passing Brisbane I was still in the leading group.

While running north up the coast I was studying the weather in the Solomon Islands, and noticed that the weather was very unstable and shifting constantly. I don't mean the days to come, but from one WX to another. Therefore I decided to try spend as little time as possible in the triangle, definitely stay away from the X region. Also I thought it would be a benefit to be more east after the Solomon, in case the main group made it through.

I was thinking about going around completely as daylaid did, but never saw any system strong enough to make it work so I decided for the route that SCARABOCCHIO and ITA210 took. But the closer I got to the triangle the better FreyjaUSA and bonknhoot route looked. When finally entering the triangle I noticed that the route I finally took was the most stable, and always had a reasonable time to my reference point passed all Solomons, so opted for that. So when bonknhoot came storming past my bow I was tempted to follow as that route was the best at that WX, but hadn't before. So I thought I would stay my course until next WX, and if it still was better I would follow. But the routes became equal in the next WX so I stayed, and later mine came back to my reference time.

So when we finally got through Solomon Islands and came out in fresh air I had a lead of 20-25 to FreyjaUSA, bonknhoot and 40-50 to SCARABOCCHIO and ITA210. I figured the first two had 5nm advantage being higher up, and the second two had 10-15nm. So I planned going best route I could and let them use up their height and close up before the next weather system. Part from my "Truman show" experience (thinking of the rain scene) where one WX evolved a blue hole only on top of me, where I lost another 5nm, it was a couple of easy days.

I was hoping the pursuer would group up behind making defending easier, but FreyjaUSA and bonknhoot opted to go further west, and I then had two double barrel on either side of me. So I continued my own route. They managed to come within 10nm before the next wind shift, but I hit the shift spot on and with a bit of down hill I pulled out a lead to 25-30nm again. I thought it would be easy going the rest of the way with so big lead, but that was all the wind I would get for the next two-three days. So it was a frustrating uphill sailing, seeing the lead shrinking all the time.

All was good, the hunters had grouped together behind me and not far to go. But then ITA210 split to the west, I couldn't see the advantage, figured he was gambling on WX. A bit later SCARABOCCHIO split to the east, what the.... and then FreyjaUSA also went other route, only bonknhoot remaining. What the hell, now they all had spread out, impossible to defend if WX would change a lot. Luckily the weather stayed stable for the last 2-3 days, and I could hit the autobahn with red winds for the final run to the finish. FreyjaUSA got within 0.1nm before I did my last tack, but then I was safe...

I think this race was the best chance for SOMP sailor to win. Very irregular WX through the Solomon and the polar was quite round for this boat, making routing easy, a strategy was more important.

Hope I wasn't too long winded, but don't know when I get another chance :)

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