

## Gulf of St Lawrence 2025 - Race Report by KaSToR

The tour of the Gulf of St. Lawrence with a Melges 40 will take us 950 nm, from Bathurst in Baie des Chaleurs, around the islands of Anticosti, pass in front of Cape Ray and Channel-Port-aux-basques, the circumvention of islands St Pierre et Miquelon, then Prince Edward Island, and return to Bathurst. The router tells me it's a short week, far too long for me, as I'm still working. I have to skip this race, but unfortunately, I'm noticing two unusual passages. The first is the Canso Canal, closed since November 24th for renovations and scheduled to reopen on May 9th.



The second is the access to Shippagan Bay and the small Pokesudie Pass for a return to Baie des Chaleurs.



So regardless of the weather or the winds, I'm signing up for the race and will sail my boat through these two places, even if it means waiting until I'm available to come by. I want to know if the locks will be open exceptionally for SOLers, and if it's technically possible to sail my boat through a passage 0.5 nm long passage and 0.057 nm wide.

Day 1 – Monday (departure): The primary objective is to cross Baie des Chaleurs and head along the north coast where the wind is stronger. I managed to stay awake until I passed Cap-d'Espoir; the passage of Cap Blanc and the one between Cap Mont Joli and Rocher Percé will be planned. Luckily, Pointe Saint-Pierre and Ile Plate should be avoided in order to take a wind corridor further east.

A tack is planned for late night south of Anticosti Island to go around it from the west.

Day 2 – Tuesday: I plan an approach to the Pointe-de-l'Ouest of the island. First stroke of luck: I get home from work just as the boat arrives along the coast. This allows me to negotiate the rounding as best I can. However, I have a lot to do with Mirek and the local justmeR8. This one took us a few lengths from the start and it was impossible to get closer.

The planned route to take me to an exit point on the far east of the island changed in the mid-afternoon, and a new route leading north of the Gulf was proposed. This route would give us less strong winds, but better angles to reach Cape Ray.

After consultation with myself, I decide to follow this route.

The tack was planned for late night, south of Baie-des-Loups.

Day 3 – Wednesday: My route took me gently down towards Cape Ray and Channel-Port-aux-Basques. Once again, luck smiled on me; I could go to bed peacefully; the route avoided the coast and sailed a little further south. I was in a fight with the usual favorites, justme having lost his way a little during the previous night. Marman and those who had attempted the direct route certainly had stronger winds, but such penalizing angles that they ended up a little further away.

Day 4 – Thursday: Morning grib where I realize I've made the right move. Having stayed a little further north than my opponents, I've shortened my route. I have slightly less strong winds but a better angle that allows me to compete in speed. I therefore find myself in the lead approaching Miquelon with a slight advantage. Luckily, once again, I'm returning from work just as I'm

approaching Miquelon. So I turn manually and set a course for L'île aux vainqueurs (would this be a sign ?).

And then, a mistake! Approaching the buoy, I realize I'm going to be beyond the best VMG. This forces me to extend my route to get away from the island.

My lead is, however, enough to stay ahead after rounding St. Pierre.

Heading west for a second mistake since, even having decided in advance that I would go through the Canto Channel, I set a course too north. Fortunately for me, the Grib doesn't take long, and my new route takes me further south, still ahead of my most pressing competitors, but only just ahead of Mirek.

Day 5 – Friday: I do my planning as best I can and head off to work with no chance of adjusting the route.

Return at 5:00 PM local time (3:00 PM UTC) to discover that the forecasts have changed little, that the very light winds have allowed an approach to the Canto Channel, and that the passage... is now. The passage is without difficulty since the winds that were supposed to be shifting remain stable during my passage.

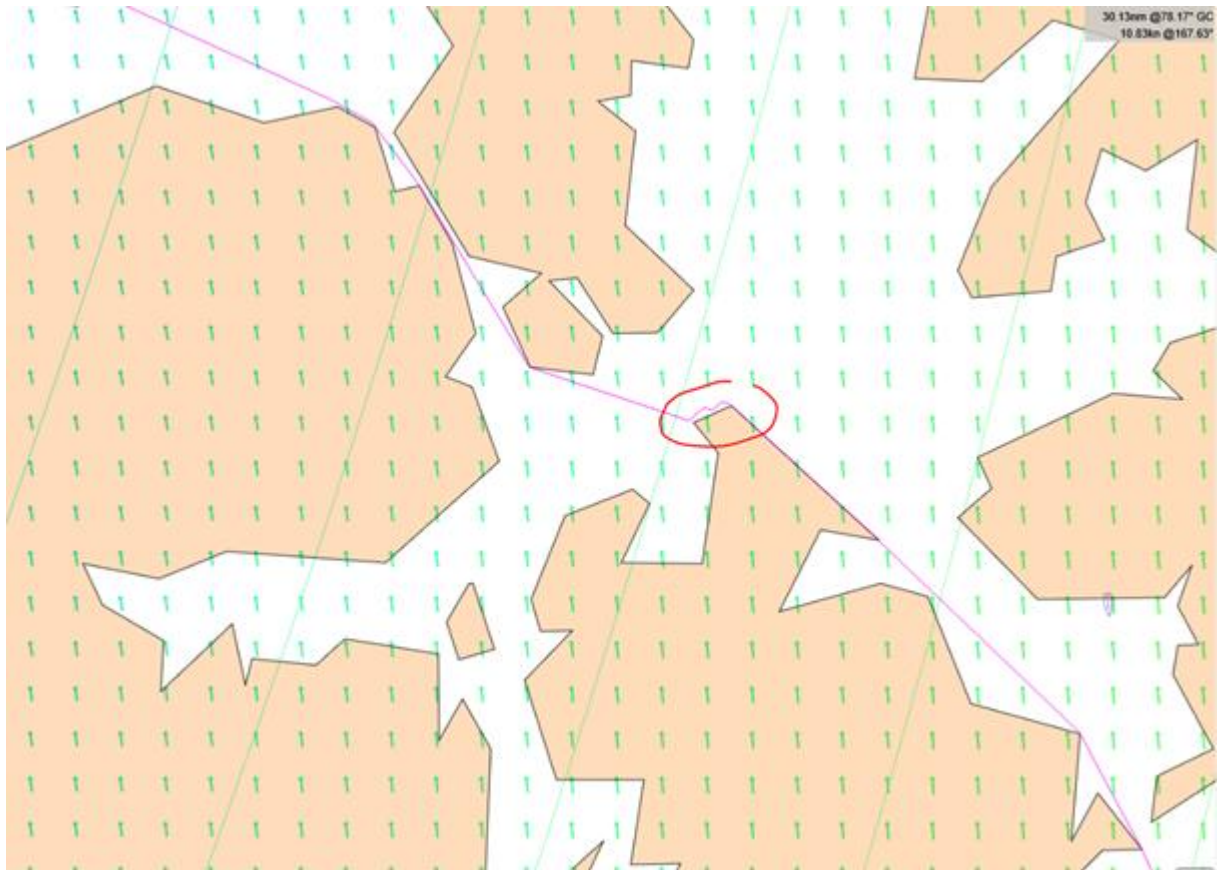
The latest news is that Mirek had a small BBQ incident and is no longer in my wake. A bit of a shame about the suspense, but knowing me, it's rather reassuring given the blunders I'm capable of.

All that remains is to pass through a zone of almost no wind in the evening (0,4 kts), tack, and head north to reach Prince Edward Island.

Day 6 – Saturday: Morning at home in front of the computer because we have to sail along the island as best we can, and this until noon. A tack then takes us towards a zone of stronger winds, to the south, to return to the coast in the late afternoon. I take the opportunity to visit the fête de la coquille Saint-Jacques to Saint-Quay-Portrieux (scallop festival).

The approach to the small channel is rapid, as the winds have picked up considerably.

For the passage, it's best to be there, and once again, it's perfect timing: it's the end of the evening. One last navigational error, without much consequence, as my opponents were no longer optimizing their trajectory either. crossed the finish line at 23:42 UTC.



I can guarantee that I stayed up until then, as my opponents had attempted one last maneuver in the chatroom, trying to distract me so that I missed the finish line...

Just kidding, I thank them for their usual sportsmanship...

And I stayed up because it was truly a beautiful course and a great week of racing that deserved to be appreciated until the end.

Special thanks to Mirek, Freyja, vida, and CriticalHippo, for managing to keep the pressure on for a good part of the race and then putting up a great fight for the podium.

And a special congratulations to Guy, whose boat, Panpyc, finished 6th, but after a missed start by a good fifteen minutes.

KaSToR – avril 2025