

Socal 300 2025 - Race Report by KaSToR

Dantesque race !

On the programme was 243 nm, from Santa Barbara to San Diego. The boat, a Santa Cruz 52s, doesn't allow for much speed, but I figure it'll be a good day at sea, with a slightly complicated grib on the first night, 'complicated' because it's the middle of the night where I live in France, and I don't get up at 4.45am.

Peu importe, je parie sur une faible variation et lance le bateau à 20h ce jeudi 29 mai.

I'm also counting on arriving the following night before 2:45 am.

The router has me a little worried about the end of the course, but the start will be due west in search of strong winds, until I get around Santa Rosa Island without bothering about the Kinton Point beacon. What's more, I'll be rounding the island early on Friday morning. Perfect for a good night's sleep.

20h45 ! Dammit, the router tells me it's better to head south and pass between Santa Cruz Island and Santa Rosa Island... Already less pleasant as you have to get up earlier for the passage... 7am local time.

5am (local time), I have to pee! Bon chance! I get up and, while I'm at it, take a look at my boat. The grib hadn't passed for a few minutes and my boat was already heading far too far west. I'm forced to change my course considerably and get into the wake of a dozen or so skippers who are more attentive than I am. Small consolation, Mirek is next to me, he must have had the same surprise as he too is altering his course.

Tight sailing, a tight rounding, and we're almost in the lead with Mirek, Yann and Rumsikib. A little ahead is CriticalHippo and maybe vida.

The 8:45 am grib, CriticalHippo and vida were at a standstill, facing into the wind 10 minutes after the grib had passed. Fortunately, I was there to prevent this from happening to me. Only 3 dangerous competitors left in the short term, Mirek, Yann and rumsikib.

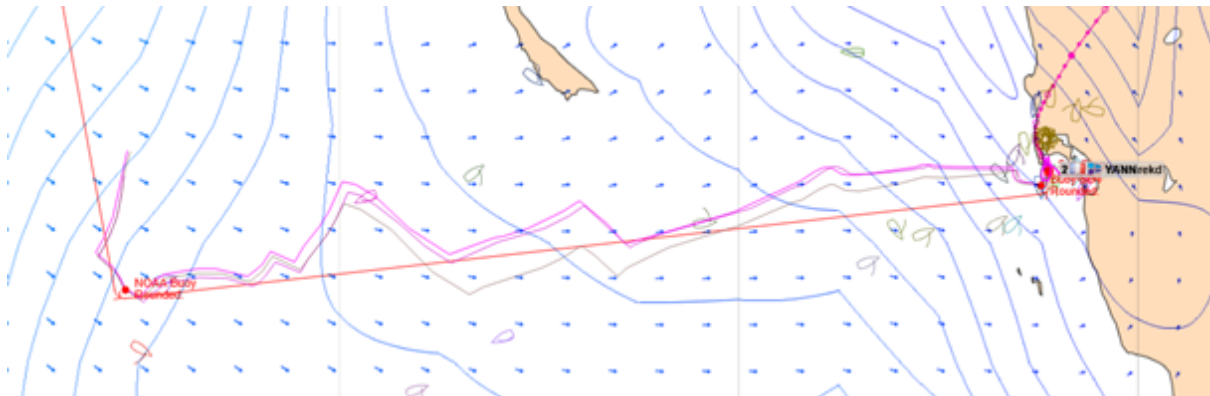
My router tells me that it would be better to round San Nicolas Island to the east before reaching the NOAA Buoy. I plan my route, but the grib forces us to head south first. Unfortunately, I pushed a little further south than my competitors to get a more direct route and a better angle to go around the island.

And then, disaster! The new grib arrives and there's no longer any question of going around the island to the east but of heading south towards the buoy. I studied the route to take and was dismayed. I did head south, but to continue south, I'd have to head due east, or even north-east to go faster. This means I'll have to follow in the wake of my former rivals, a quarter of an hour behind! And given the quality of their navigation, I know I've lost the race.

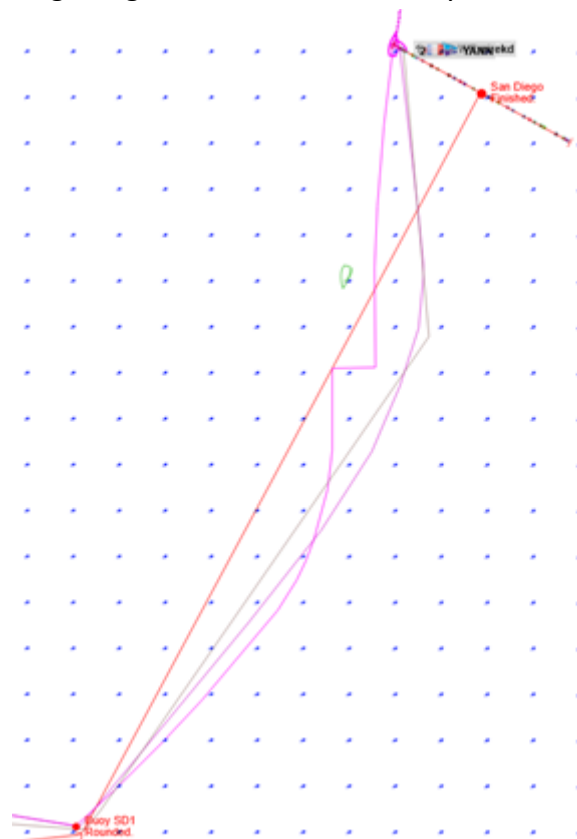
Grib of 2h45 on Friday night.... Having already covered a lot of ground, I set the alarm.

5am local time, just a quarter of an hour after the grib. Incredibly, everything has changed again. Reprogramming is necessary. But it's an elimination race for those who are asleep. What followed was a long-distance chase behind Mirek and Yann, who I lost quite a bit of time on again. Their sailing in these light winds is much better than mine.

I had to wake up again on Sunday morning ! And at last, a late afternoon arrival. Just to give you an idea... here's the last RIGHT LINE of the podium!



Even getting to the finish wasn't easy, a real ordeal !



There was even one who almost missed the line, too busy cooking his Breton pancakes! (graphics are extra feint to reflect the strength of the wind – editor)

I think we can really congratulate all the brave people who managed to get to the line!
Personally, I've never seen such variations in forecasts at each grib, variations that were completely unpredictable for me.

KaSToR / June 2025