

Race Report

New Ice Age 2026 – Browerville to Longyearbyen

By vida

4 March 2026

I started this race in a cruising mode, since I was busy with real life stuff. Cruising mode for me means no router and checking the boat once or twice a day.

It was not too difficult to figure out which direction to start. Go North.

The question was, to venture through the narrow passages north of Devon Island or pass South of the island where the channel is wider and straight, but a longer course. I opted to pass south mainly because there would be less change to BBQ since I wasn't babysitting the computer in the first leg of the race.

Once in the Baffin Bay, we sailed North through the Kennedy Channel, Robenson Channel and finally into the Lincoln Sea. That is latitude 84 deg North or so. Wow! Only on Sailonline.

As we sailed North through the channels, I started to notice that above 80 degrees or so, the predictor line hook in no matter which port you are sailing. So, the rule-of-thumb to sailed in to tack latter higher doesn't really work at these latitudes.

Furthermore, the risk of BBQ increases due to the lack of precision of the predictor. (I am not 100% sure about that, but that was what I noticed.) And given the conversation in the chat about sailors having problems with routers, I suspect that it is all due to the Mercator Earth projection not being ideal for high latitude navigation.

I asked "Gemini AI"; "What is the best earth projection to navigate in high latitudes?", and the answer:

*"For navigating in high latitudes (typically above 60° or 70°), the **Polar Stereographic projection** is considered the standard and most effective choice.*

While the [Mercator projection](#) is the global standard for marine navigation, its distortion becomes extreme near the poles, making it unusable for accurate high-latitude work.”

So, since we are playing with the Mercator projection, I decided to skip paying attention to the predictor and follow where the wind is stronger. The DN Ice boat accelerates quickly and loves high wind. The wind was much stronger near the Greenland side of the channels, and that was where I sailed.

To my surprise all the leading boats went near the Canada side. I was alone. Usually when I sail alone, I am wrong! But not this time.

When I finally crossed the fleet, I was comfortable ahead. My plan worked!

From there to the finish line was a matter to keep my boat between the fleet and the finish line. By then, I completely forgot about real life and stayed with the computer for the final 24 hours of the race.

I finished 18 minutes ahead of Mirek (a first!). Congratulations to the leading sailors and all that finished this interesting race.

We should sail more often at these very high latitudes to give a chance to the non-router sailors.

As always, my sincere thanks to all the volunteers that make Sailonline happen.

Antonio (boat: **vida**)