

So, this window looks good. But it's time to head to the bunk. I'd have to rely on a bunch of DCs until well past the first mark, and with my luck with Wx, that's a recipe for a BBQ.

I take the sleepy way out and wait until the morning, the weather looks like it should be OK, so I might still get a reasonable time.

Straightforward route to the west to the first mark. Which was a good thing as work got in the way of tighter roundings. But why aren't there many other boats around? An hour or two into the run and a few familiar names have now started, which gives a bit more confidence that I chose a good window. Although, if they started later, does that mean I started too early?

Round the mark, now the choice is to head west in higher winds, or east in lower winds but a better angle. The higher speeds are tempting, but I choose the latter as this also gives a direct route from the most easterly point of the track, south through the channel between the shore and the island, and straight to the finish line. No more course changes required.

Until the Wx blew that out of the water. I should have known that such a simple course was too good to be true.

Too late to go west now, I carried on east before heading south, now having to carve in a zig zag through the channel, with some performance loss mitigation thrown in. Calculating this for the zig was easy as I was starting at 100%. Calculating it for the zag was more of a challenge for my SOTP brain as I needed to first calculate what performance I would have got back to from the zig. In the end I was too cautious, but it was still better than not having made the effort.

One last course change and over the line, sneaking in just under the 10 hours and, just to confirm that it was a good window, nearly 2.5 hours ahead of the previous best time. I knew it wasn't going to last, and sure enough, the other boats in that same window started to fill up the top places. Just needed to wait and see who would go ahead of me.

But the winds dropped and swung away and the window closed, with Horatio still at the top.

And then started a very (very) long wait for the race to finish. Lots of checking of weather windows, a couple of routes planned out, but not started as the winds were never in the right direction for a fast time.

Until, at last, the race is run, and I can finally tick off the last remaining position on my top 20 bingo card. It took a while...