

NEWPORT BERMUDA ONLINE 2026

Looking at the forecast for the 2026 Newport to Bermuda race, several things stuck out:

- The wind was forecast to be fairly steady over the time of the race, except near Bermuda. There was an area of low wind stretching out from Florida toward Bermuda, and its extent varied over time.
- Wind was generally stronger to the NE of the rhumbline.
- Wind direction was fairly optimal for getting to the NE of the rhumbline near the start, and then reaching at near peak TWA most of the race.

But how far to deviate from the rhumbline? Courses that were too close were slowed by the blue wind zone. The risk of going wide was that the blue could retreat in future forecasts, leaving an open path for boats closer in.

Shortly after the start (or anytime, really), when you find yourself on the far edge of the fleet, you have to wonder, "What am I missing?" But there was no obvious better path, so onward! Most of the race, the fleet were on parallel paths, dictated by slight shifts in wind, and then converging as we approached Bermuda. The in-close boats were ahead, but in less favorable wind, so it seemed like anybody's race.

I spent that afternoon and evening with our parents (*that's author RT and brother CD, ed.*), who live just a short distance away. I took my computer to check on course near the two marks, and because our father is the true blue-water sailor in the family, the one who sparked our interest. The longer course ended up being slightly favored by Lady Luck: first to the mark was Flamingo, followed by Ibis, two birds of a feather, cdhinman remarked. Then came cdhinman with me and a big pack in hot pursuit.

Dad and I watched with some confusion because Ibis's course was headed for the far end of the finish line. Then we realized in dismay that the captain was probably asleep, and the boat's crew was keen for a cookout at Great Head Park. That bumped me from fourth to my first podium finish on SailOnline.

Well sailed to all, especially Flamingo, Ibis, and cdhinman. Thanks to the race committee for another excellent race.

rthinman / June 2026