



New Ice Age 2026 - Neumayer Station to Scott Base - Race Report by KaSToR

After a previous attempt at a similar race, which I had to abandon due to a lack of time – but mainly because I had not understood the strategy to adopt – here I am, setting off again for another attempt.

I now know that the instruments, particularly the router, are severely thrown off by extreme latitudes. I also know that the projection line is of no help whatsoever as soon as a manoeuvre is planned along it.

It might be worth explaining why this is the case for Solers beginners.

With all the conventional boats in the SOL fleet, a manoeuvre such as a gybe or a jibe results in a speed-related penalty. With the DN, the speeds reached are extreme (during the race, we often sailed at over 50 knots). At a speed of 50 knots, with a conventional boat, the penalty is a 25 per cent reduction in speed. It takes a very long time to return to 100 per cent speed, which can run to several hours depending on the wind strength.

The projected course takes this into account, whereas the DN is not subject to any such penalty. The DN will therefore travel much faster than the projected course indicates, when manoeuvring, and even more so during a series of manoeuvres.

Similarly, it is sometimes advantageous to carry out multiple manoeuvres to stay within a strong wind corridor, hence the fairly frequent zigzags observed.

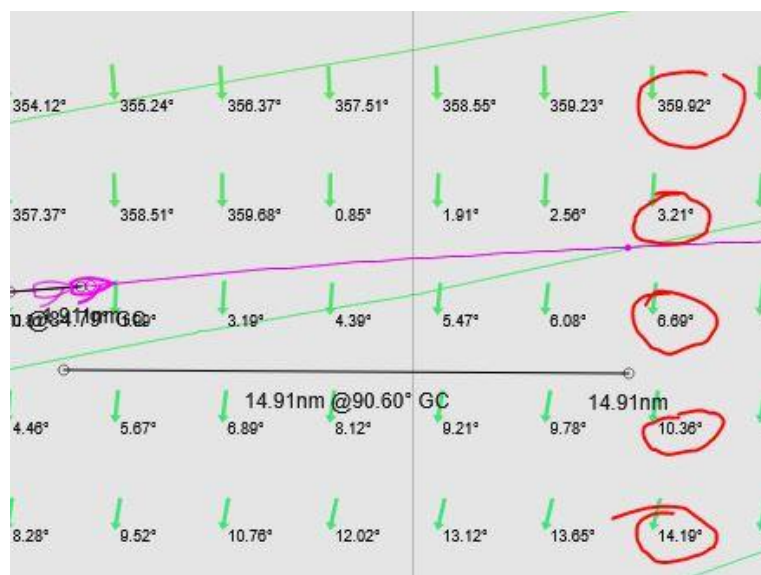
With that in mind, I set off on what was to turn out to be a real adventure.

During the race, I encountered new challenges linked, once again, to the latitudes: tiny but very pronounced low-pressure systems, with significant variations in wind direction.

To give you an idea: about 15 nm ahead of the boat, I sometimes encountered a 15° variation in wind angle over a distance of 10 nm. Due to the incorrect projection line, I realised that a TWA variation of just one degree one to two hours before reaching such an area could cause the projection line to reverse direction.

This is a problem when you're relying on the DCs for the duration of a GRIB file, i.e. 6 hours.

In conclusion, despite navigation tools being less reliable than in conventional races, you have to aim for even more precise navigation. And all this often has to be done in a hurry, given the boat's speed. A 10-second delay from the server can sometimes mean a displacement of nearly 300 meters!



As for the race itself, after a tough battle with Hippo and wsguerin, one grib after another, I found myself delaying the moment when I had to switch from the route heading east to the route heading south to reach the finish.

It was by choosing to delay this move for as long as possible that I managed to gain a slight lead.

However, rafa and Sax747 made a strong comeback in the race and ultimately shared the podium.

The winds were dying down as we approached the finish, and as Hippo and wsguerin found out, the slightest mistake on my part would have been fatal.

Well done to them.

KaSToR – juillet 2026

*Having set off with no hope of doing well, I've kept virtually no records of the race, so I'm writing this report from memory.
My apologies to those who achieved great feats that I've forgotten to mention.*