

Uovo di Colombo, *The Egg of Columbus*

Dragon's Teeth to Ko Tapu (1187 NM)

By "SlideRule" (Scott) and "HastySlug" (Thomas)

This was a very complex, and potentially frustrating race filled with very small and larger opportunities. The podium and leaders deserve credit for sailing extremely well. As I write this more than a day after our finish, 2/3 of the fleet is still sailing.

This was SlideRule's best outcome since I joined SOL nine months ago. SlideRule finished 85.85 NM and 6 hours 45 minutes ahead of next boat. The question is "how did that happen?", because SOL races can be quite close with identical boats. My SOL friend Thomas of "HastySlug" named our strategy the "Uovo di Colombo", the egg of Columbus. This is the idea that is obvious to everyone after it is done, but difficult to see in advance, and of course only if it actually works.

Lesson #1 > The first key and thanks for the execution of our strategy was Thomas of "HastySlug". The 04:30 weather is 12:30 AM in the morning my time on the east coast of the US when I am exceptionally stupid, but is a very nice 7:30 AM in the morning for Thomas, when he is on his second espresso! Conversely 22:30 GMT is 6:30 PM my time with a glass of red wine and but of course, Thomas's wife hates it when he gets up at 1:30 AM to update his SOL routing... Thomas and I are also at a similar level of skill and competency with QVtlm and sailing strategy. We have a valuable exchange of information and insight when we trade notes and observations before and after the "offwatch". After 22:30 I leave notes and guidance for him and after 0430 he sends me an update and his observations. **Takeaway** - Clearly, there is value in global cooperation and SOL "offwatch" challenge is proof of this!

Lesson #2 > IN THIS RACE, you could not afford to miss a weather drop, particularly early in the race in the narrows of the Straits of Malacca! Competition for the top in SOL is friendly, but also intense, so it is essential to take full advantage of the next 6 hours of certain weather. Early in the race, it was important not to get behind the "leading edge" of the fleet even if you were not ranked in the lead. I suggest you look at the "arc" of the leaders and try to keep your "spot". **Takeaway** - SOL is a prime example of "competitive convergence", it is very hard to get ahead more than temporarily!

Lesson #3 > SlideRule finally did get a slight initial "lead" when we held the "left" edge and everyone took a gybe in that direction to follow us (this is the coin flip). Huge credit to *Mediterranean* for staying extremely close for several days. On two occasions SlideRule has to give up the VMC down the "rhumb line" (the geometric lead) to keep the effective lead to where we wanted to go with the boat. This is psychologically difficult for the competitive human ego. In the past I have "clung" desperately to the lead only to lose it in the long run. **Takeaway** - SOL is a constant study in human behavior and self awareness > clinical probability trumps ego.

Lesson #4 > "The Egg of Columbus" > The router thinks the future is just as certain as the present. Of course the router is not "the truth", except that is pretty good for the next six hours! After that it is always increasingly uncertain and not to be relied on. The early long term router solutions were "unstable", fluctuating wildly. Thus you will notice in the chat, the various references to the Heisenberg Uncertainty principle and Shrodinger's cat. *Dingo* taught me to run the long term, but pick a best shorter solution on very long races. **Takeaway** > When the long-term is uncertain do not let "the tail wag the dog"!

Final Lesson> The Breakaway > Get the lead and keep the lead, stick with your strategy! Slide and my SOL friend Hasty, collectively believed there would be more wind up the course exiting the narrows, AND **getting to it first** was the strategic priority. After we achieved a little separation we went as fast and directly as possible for the new wind. On several occasions in the rest of the race we got to the wind first as it increased. A key one was when we worked through one last “hole” exiting the narrows, SlideRule dropped to .2 Kts and .1 Kts of TWS for a very short period, but it slowed the fleet while we accelerated away into new pressure. During these times our lead “multiplied” because we were “ALWAYS” in more wind for many hours traveling perpendicular to the ISO’s. There were some lesser “compressions” as we exited high wind fields and from geometry changes, but the chase group was always following us so we were not too worried because they had no leverage or passing opportunity. Zorba spoke truth in the chat when he said that the “lead” could blow up in a race like this, but we wanted to avoid overconfidence even as we were optimistic. The final “good luck” was that we got around Car Nicobar in just front of the lighter air and were able to route South into an increasing wind field that kept us ahead of the “blue goo”. Chipspitter made a dire prediction for us, the router said that we would probably “benefit” and most of the fleet would be caught by the calm. Now staying ahead of the calm was the priority.

Final Race Chapter > For the last leg only two boats followed us south, but they were slightly “late” and caught part of the blue goo flu. Med BBQ’d on the island for a short stint which was too bad, because he sailed brilliantly and kept scaring us for most of the race. The North Group was disturbing to us because they were all SOL usual suspects and they were getting differentiated from us with several weathers left to go. We always showed them 6 hours behind us at the finish, and just ahead of the South chase group. In the end the North and South chase groups came together very closely, but we almost always had better wind and VMC for the finish so the lead kept expanding. **Takeaway** > Once you are committed, stick to your strategy, also pray some to different deities just in case!

Conclusion > On good days the local GOD and PHYSICS agree with each other, and you can find the OPPORTUNITY! This was my first win in SOL after many mistakes and learnings over the last 9 months. I hope to apply what I’ve learned to my real sailing. I’m grateful to SOL experts for teaching and particularly to Thomas aka “@Hasty” for contributing to an exceptional outcome.

Scott

capecodderer@gmail.com, sfb26@cornell.edu

“Slide Rule” US52744

Home Port: Hyannis Yacht Club, Barnstable MA

