

Aye, this turned out to be a cracker of a race, and at least the third of the 2021 SYC Cup 12-race series that required a good smattering of luck and judgment and not just precision routing. Having hubristically attempted to DC through the night round Ilhabela during Adriano's Brazil Run, the first race of the series, I had done OK the next race, the New Hebrides Challenge. However, race three, in early Spring in wrf wind in the Tyrrhenian Sea, went all quite wrong. Big strategic calls, also known as ignoring or better still missing the forecast update, were the secret of success and Kanuck Azur, in his first and last win of his long and illustrious SOL-career, showed us all how that should be done. I finished 15th.

So, that was my two discards for the series done after just three races. Two solid results followed, but then it was time for a race across the lower reaches of the South China in Summer! Again, as has been the norm during this SYC series, SOL was fetching its wind in hires wrf format, and as had been the case in the race in the Tyrrhenian Sea, the forecasts proved volatile. Things were not looking promising at all as roughly halfway we rounded Pulau Tioman, but a long slog into the wind thereafter quite saved me. Beating, sailing fast into the headers and curving tightly at optimum angles on the lifts, is so much easier than hunting for wind on a beam reach, and I finished 6th which was OK.

I noted this race was not going to be in wrf, but in nam-awip direct from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, so perhaps that would provide us with more predictable conditions and a low risk for bonk of a further discardable (if only) result. On the other hand, steady weather would just confirm the status quo, which was not going to help bonk climb the series rankings. Turned out it was a mixed bag: to the left of the Ajax Buoy steady, to the right volatile.

So, in steady weather, I was pleased to see I nailed it, to round that mid-course buoy first and with the pressure clearly strongest in the middle of the lake, short tacking into what I understood to be an atypical easterly I managed to extend a little. However, as the wind died away, approaching M8, a big shift in the WX caught me out and I staggered around M9 6th, at least a quarter of an hour behind the leader, SlideRule.

But the wind remained light and variable and this time keeping close to the Canadian shore paid off, and several of my overtakers who had kept to the U.S. side on the way out did so again on the way in, losing all they had gained by the time we passed Ajax again. Bit of luck, that.

SlideRule however could not be caught, but finishing P2 was pretty satisfying nonetheless and with my great friend and rival WRmirekd having an off-day by his standards, with still five races to go things are now very close, although of course I have used my discards. Can't wait for the next round - Brisbane to Hamilton Island on August 6. Hope to see you all out!

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