

## **Lady Luck**

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Skipper of America3 and  
Winnier of the 1992 America's Cup

The score stands at 3 to 3 and the racing in the finals of the Louis Vuitton Cup are the closest and most exciting in the Cup's history. The boats are so close that it will probably go to nine races.

A race by race analysis today emphasizes how evenly matched the teams are. The victory margin (not counting the DNF race) have varied from 2m 32s to 9s, and average 40s, remarkable for an America's Cup. AmericaOne has won the start 5 times and tied with Prada twice. However, both Prada and AmericaOne have been the first boat to weather mark but both have only won one of those times. Both boats have come from behind twice to wind and both have had the lead and lost twice. This drops the percentage of 89.7% for the first boat to the weather mark winning in the round robins and semifinals to 33.3% in the finals. Both are ignoring classical matching tactics, by not covering and are free styling it. Losing a race after winning the first mark is silly. The reason given is "it is so shifty out here, we have to play the wind shifts. If we cover we will lose." This logic is beyond me. The tacticians must believe they have such a divine relationship with mother nature that they can read the wind. In San Diego the wind was equally shifty but not so variable in speed. America3 was so much faster than Il Moro we should have won by an average of 2 to 3 minutes. Instead our average was 1m 5s, because we gave up potential big gains to stay between our opponent and the next mark. In the one race where we tried to play the wind only, we lost. It does not matter if you win big. All that matters is being first across the finish line, even if only by a few seconds.

Prada has no significant equipment failures whereas AmericaOne has had 4. Prada has one penalty to AmericaOne's 4. Both have had an equal number of sail handling errors. AmericaOne has gained on Il windward legs an average of 17 seconds and Prada on 5 an average

of 36 seconds. AmericaOne has gained on 7 downward legs, an average of 27 seconds and AmericaOne on 10, an average of 49 seconds. Prada has passed AmericaOne in two leeward legs and AmericaOne has passed Prada once in an upwind leg and in a downwind leg.

There have been 4 jibe sets so far. In race 2 at the first windward mark both boats did a jibe set. At the second windward mark Prada only did a gybe set and AmericaOne gained 45s on that leg. In race 5 AmericaOne only jibed set at the last windward mark and Prada gained by 8s. There is not enough data, but it appears that a jibe set is costly.

From this data it appears that AmericaOne is very slightly faster upwind and Prada very slightly faster downwind. The differences are measured in a few seconds. What makes the difference between winning and losing out here is crew mistakes and breakages. Will tactics make a difference? Of course, but since both boats throw the dice big time, which boat wins will be up to lady luck and mother nature.