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President Bill Clinton had a great expression when meeting people with troubles. He always connected by saying, "I feel your pain." To paraphrase Mr. Clinton, "We are feeling Emirate Team New Zealand's pain." The fading, near-winners of the America's Cup just don't seem to have an answer for the remarkable comeback by Oracle Team USA. The Kiwis have canceled victory celebrations, a charter flight to Auckland and said goodbye to many fans who have patiently waited for the big win. This could be the biggest collapse in the history of the America's Cup. Just five days ago, ETNZ was up 8-1, but now the score is 8-6. The USA has won five straight, and are getting faster and better with each race. What can the Kiwis do?

First a quick review of the performance differences between NZL and USA 17. At the start of Race 16 today, both boats were exactly 0.5 seconds behind the starting line, according to the AC LiveLine data. In 12.2 knots of wind (at least what I read on the race committee boat, *Regardless*)

OTUSA lifted up on its foils immediately after the start. New Zealand did not lift off its foils and was rolled by USA 17 that had started to windward. On the downwind leg, the American boat slowly stretched out. Halfway down Leg Three, NZL rolled out its gennaker. The speeds were nearly identically. Not taking any chances, OTUSA rolled out its gennaker. At the leeward gate

the boats split sides. Against a 1.5-knot flood current, and sailing in spotty 11-15 knot winds, the two boats seemed even in speed. Just last week NZL would have sailed right past USA 17. Not anymore.



So let's say you have to defeat a boat that is faster reaching, has a slight edge downwind, can foil earlier, and can maneuver just as well as you. What could you do to reach the finish line ahead? The first step is to win the start. NZL skipper, Dean Barker has won several starts. He knows he can do it. OTUSA's Australian skipper, James Spithill, understands that Barker is really good and will try not to take risky chances. Barker must be bold, and try something that Spithill doesn't expect. Against a boat that appears to accelerate faster, Barker needs to start to leeward and ahead, and force USA 17 away from the first mark. On the downwind leg, Kiwi tactician Ray Davies must look forward and keep his boat in stronger winds. At times he should call to cover closely, while at other times he must be bold when he is sure his boat is in better wind. These are tricky calls, but this is the moment for greatness. If NZL can round ahead at the leeward gate they must cover USA 17 and use their starboard advantage and wind shadow to force USA 17 to make extra tacks, or sail in disturbed wind. If the USA gets behind on Leg Three, watch them make some desperate moves. Life is good when you are leading, but things can change if you get behind. When the hard truth of defeat is on the horizon mistakes are often made.

In my long career on the match race circuit, and in a number of America's Cup trials, I have been on a slower boat, and still found a way to win. (I have also been on faster boats and still lost). Every athlete is capable of mistakes, including the crew of USA 17. For NZL it starts with the belief that they can win. Dean Barker and his crew have already won eight races, and they have been ahead in three others that were canceled. Bad luck for NZL, but you can't look back. It hasn't been so easy for OTUSA, either.

