

# Evaluating Nobeltec's Sailing Plus Pack

One add-on that may appeal to racers and performance-oriented cruisers is the Sailing Plus Pack, which offers the ability to match the boat's current performance against its polars. The Plus Pack is also available for Nobeltec VNS users.

Unfortunately, this feature, as implemented in Admiral V9.1, is of limited value. A "layline" is commonly defined as "an imaginary line on which a sailboat can sail directly to its target without tacking." Maximum and minimum laylines define the range of headings that one could follow in order to reach the next waypoint.

In order to use polar data and generate accurate laylines, your boat must have a GPS and a weather sensor that outputs apparent wind speed and direction. The Sailing Plus Pack combines the apparent wind information with GPS information to create true wind speed and direction.

Polar data for most boats are available from US Sailing for a fee (Performance Packages, including spreadsheet with graphs and text, cost \$300). However, Nobeltec does not provide the

program that converts the US Sailing polar data to the proprietary binary format that the software requires, so one must laboriously type all of the US Sailing data into Nobeltec's data editing form. The Performance Packages contain polar information from 6-24 knots for every sail combination.

None of the software that use polar data for routing purposes is particularly user-friendly, but Nobeltec falls short in many respects. While MaxSea and RayTech show alternative routes between waypoints and allow for an optimized route to be selected, Nobeltec just shows several short lines emanating from the boat and the next waypoint. The company says it is working to improve route optimization function.

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*RayTech VNS 6.0 (right) generates alternative routes between waypoints. Nobeltec Admiral 9.1 (left) does not offer this feature.*

