

## VNR

### America's Cup World Series – OMAN

#### Saturday 27 February 2016

America's Cup sailing came to the Middle East for the very first time. Oman played host and the city of Muscat turned out for a glimpse of sailing's greatest prize. Wind conditions on the Sea of Oman were light but 7 knots were enough to get the action underway.

The regatta began badly for Britain's Landrover BAR and Groupama Team France who picked up penalties at the start. That meant slowing down until released, by which time Emirates Team New Zealand were well ahead battling at the front with Sweden's Artemis Racing.

It was a battle decided by the umpires who penalised Artemis for an earlier incident....

...and that saw Kiwi helmsman Peter Burling go clear into the lead from where he dominated the race.

Emirates Team New Zealand claimed the day's first race 37 seconds ahead of Team USA after a calm, consistent performance.

The second start of the day was a reversal of the first with Emirates Team New Zealand picking up a penalty but Landrover BAR leading the fleet.

Once ahead five times Olympic medallist Sir Ben Ainslie is hard to catch and he led to the first mark

Not even a snagged sail could do much to interrupt the Britons' rhythm.

America's Cup defenders Team USA saw nothing go their way and were left down and out - a full kilometre behind Landrover B.A.R.

The British crew crossed the line well ahead of second placed Softbank Team Japan.

On to Race 3 and now the wind was beginning to get even lighter meaning the slightest errors would be punished. This time the Japanese and Emirates Team New Zealand started well.

Their advantage didn't last long though as Landrover BAR found some extra breeze to fly past the Kiwis.

And on Leg Three Jimmy Spithill and his Team USA crossed the course to go ahead of the leaders Team Japan and Ben Ainslie Racing.

(Original sound: Jimmy Spithill, Oracle Team USA)

"So I thought in my third race we made another big step, which is great and yes, so we just keep learning, we will look at the video tonight and try to take another step."

By the final gate there was little to separate the Americans and Britons but BAR came out on top, just 14 seconds ahead of Spithill. It was a slender lead that grew and grew on the final leg.

When Ainslie crossed the finish line to claim his second victory of the day Landrover BAR were over a minute ahead of second placed Spithill. It was a result that gives the Britons a 4 point lead overall in Oman but with Sunday's racing worth double points the regatta remains wide open for all teams.