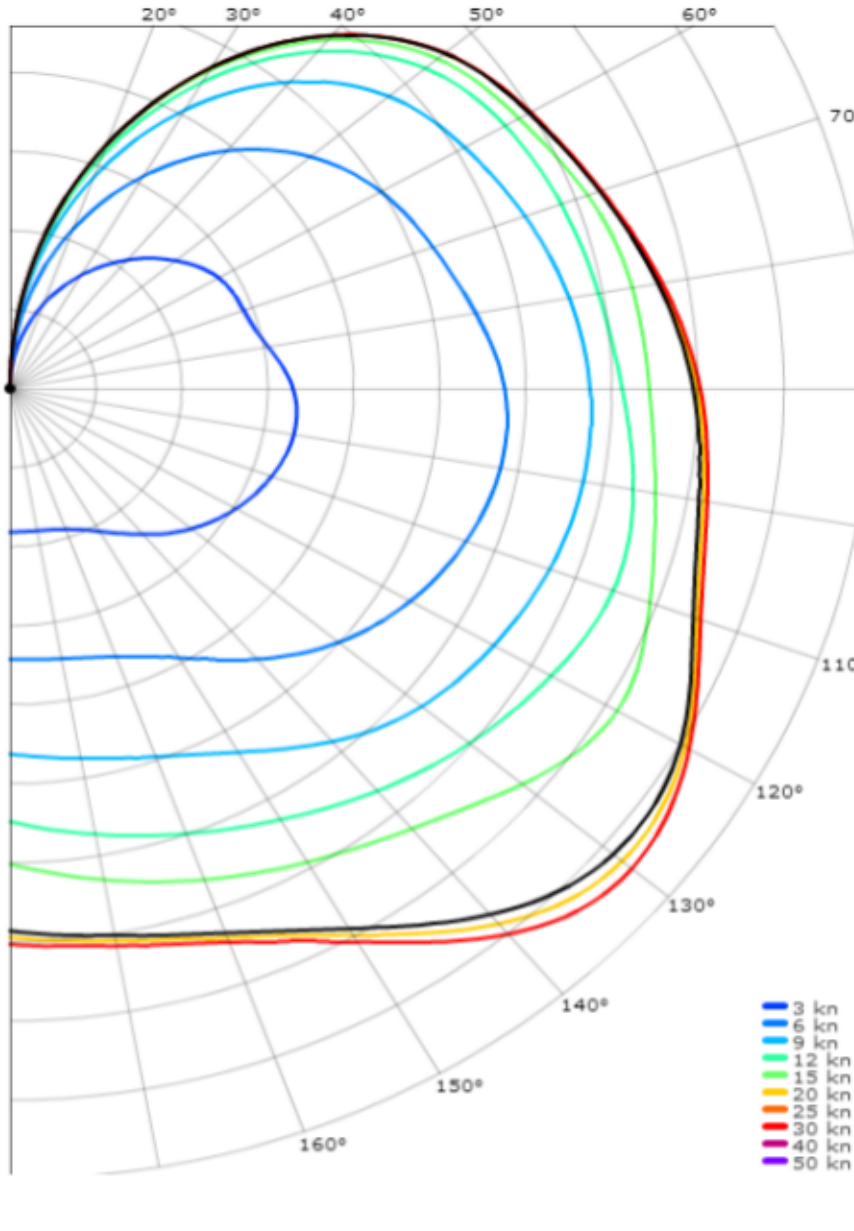


Race Report for Kipper1258 - Cowes to St Malo 2015

Without the likes of **kenza**, **bonkenhoot**, **dingo** and a few others racing, this was the race to win. And how close it was. With 5 seconds separating first and second, and 7 seconds third and fourth, the race was not over until one crossed the line.

Now to my observations. The race was run with six major decision points. I'll discuss each later. Firstly, the polar. This was going to be a work all the way to the finish except getting out of Cowes. I don't think any of my TWA's went above 80 degrees. So in the region below 80, TWS above 22kts will make no difference to the boat performance. TWA had far more impact.



For example, at TWA 54 degrees, there is only 0.13 kts boat speed difference between 16 and 22 kts. At 16 kts TWS, there is 0.17 kts boat speed difference between TWA 51 and TWA 54. So once the wind speed tacked up, TWA was going to have far greater bearing on boat performance than TWS.

Picking a course that capitalised on that fact was going to be important.

Decision Points

As I mentioned above, there were six decisions to make. These are labelled below.



The thick pink line is me, the thin pink line is **aner59** and the light blue is **Saint_Lucia**.

Coming out of Cowes, the strategy for me was to round the Needles without a BBQ. It was the middle of the night here and I was asleep for the start. My pep talk to the ship's worked cat and she steered a great course. The threat of being dumped in the middle of the English Channel had some bearing on her performance after the woeful episode on Lake Superior. She was told to sail COG to get to the Needles and then to Max VMG after that.

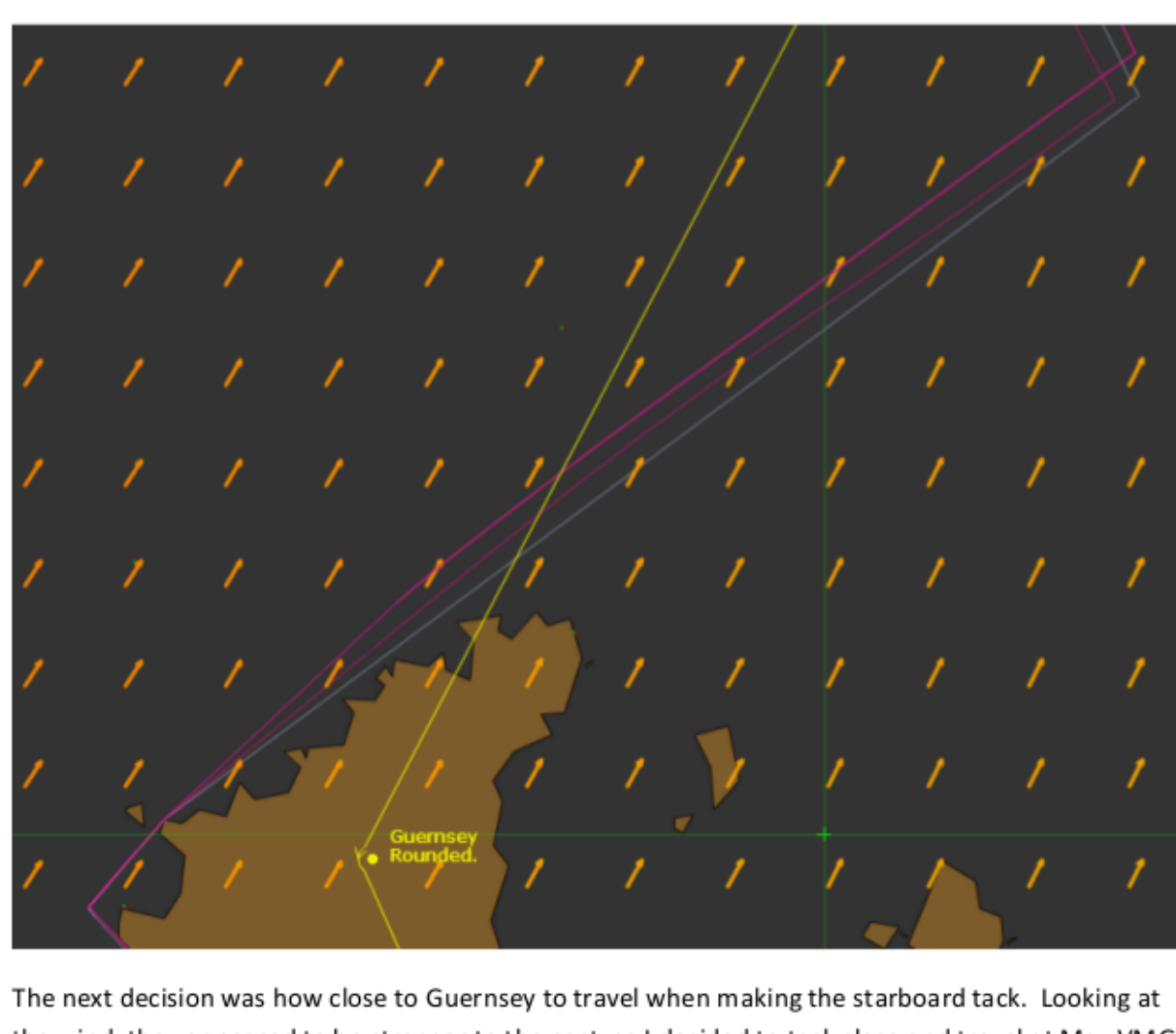
Decision 1

The first decision was when to tack. **aner59** took a slightly more northern route than me with **Saint Lucia** taking the middle ground. We all tacked around the same time, and for me, the cat was the helm. Nothing spectacular here.



Decision 2 & 3

The next significant decision was when to tack to lay Guernsey Island. I had sailed a bit deeper on the starboard and tacked over to port a bit sooner and ended up rounding Guernsey in the lead. **Rumskib** was hot on our heels at this stage and really in contention for a podium. I think the Wx that came through during that final approach drove him a bit further south and ended in a BBQ. Really unfortunate.

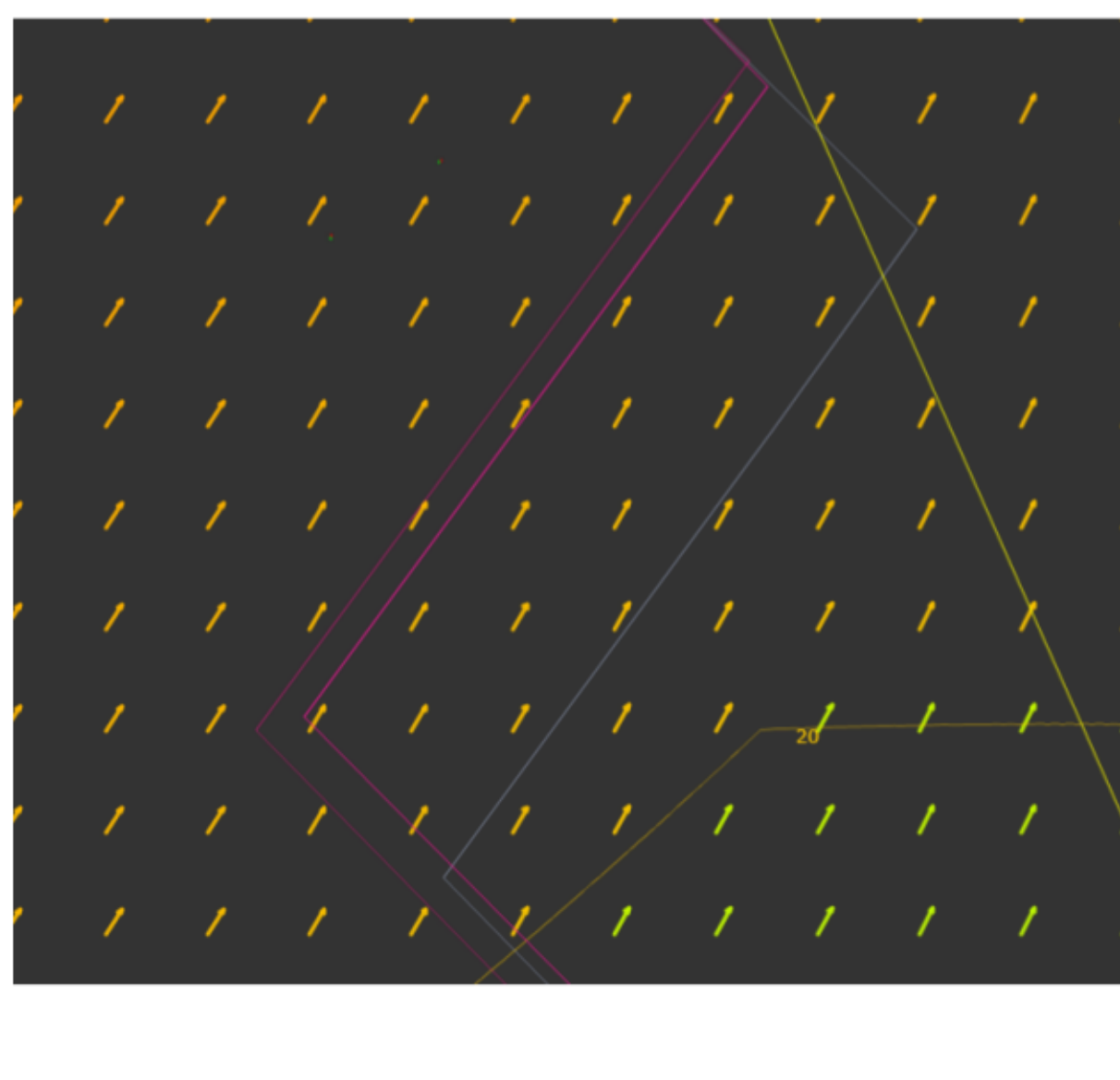


The next decision was how close to Guernsey to travel when making the starboard tack. Looking at the wind, they appeared to be stronger to the east, so I decided to tack close and travel at Max VMG down the western shore. **aner59** and **Saint Lucia** followed suit. I was still in the lead at this stage.

Decision 4 & 5

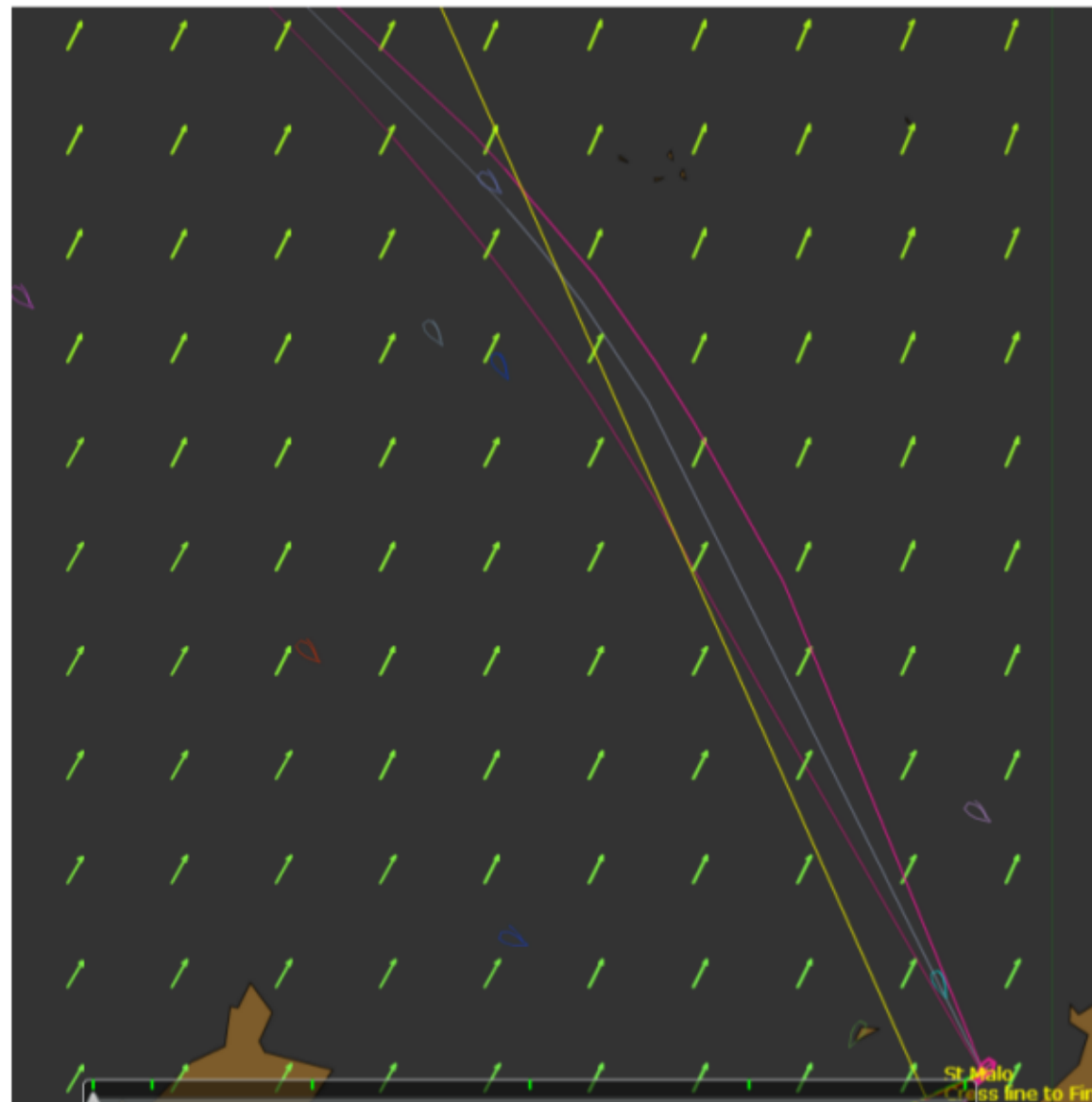
Heading west on starboard was necessary at some stage. The winds to the east were getting stronger, but also reaching the point where TWA was far more important. My tack onto starboard was triggered by **aner59** to cover, whilst **Saint Lucia** kept going for a while into the stronger winds with I believe no advantage.

I then had to hand the helm to the cat for the final tack onto starboard for the finish and had to rely on her sailing the boat. Whilst she helms pretty well with lost instructions, she does not understand tactics and how to cover and it was in this section where I lost my advantage. **aner59** sailed a bit further than I did on port and had a more favourable angle to the finish.



Decision 6 - My Mistake

So where did I go wrong. I tacked too soon and sailed too deep. Notice how my track separates from **aner59**. The cat was at the helm at this stage and the little kink in my track (thick pink) is where I woke up to correct for the finish. My lead was 0.3 nm and **aner59** was travelling 0.3 kts faster than me with one hour to go. The finish was going to be very close. As it turns out, **aner59** crossed the line 5 second ahead.



That's a Wrap...

My congratulations to **aner59** on a great win. This is my best result ever in SOL and soooo close to that elusive win. Well sailed to **Saint_Lucia** and **DIKHEHENK** who were in contention the whole time, just waiting to pounce. And my condolences to **rumskib**, who was sailing brilliantly until that unfortunate BBQ. You deserved to be up there.

Thanks to all my fellow SOLers and our admin whose tireless work makes this all possible.

And the cat gets to sail another voyage.

Kipper1258