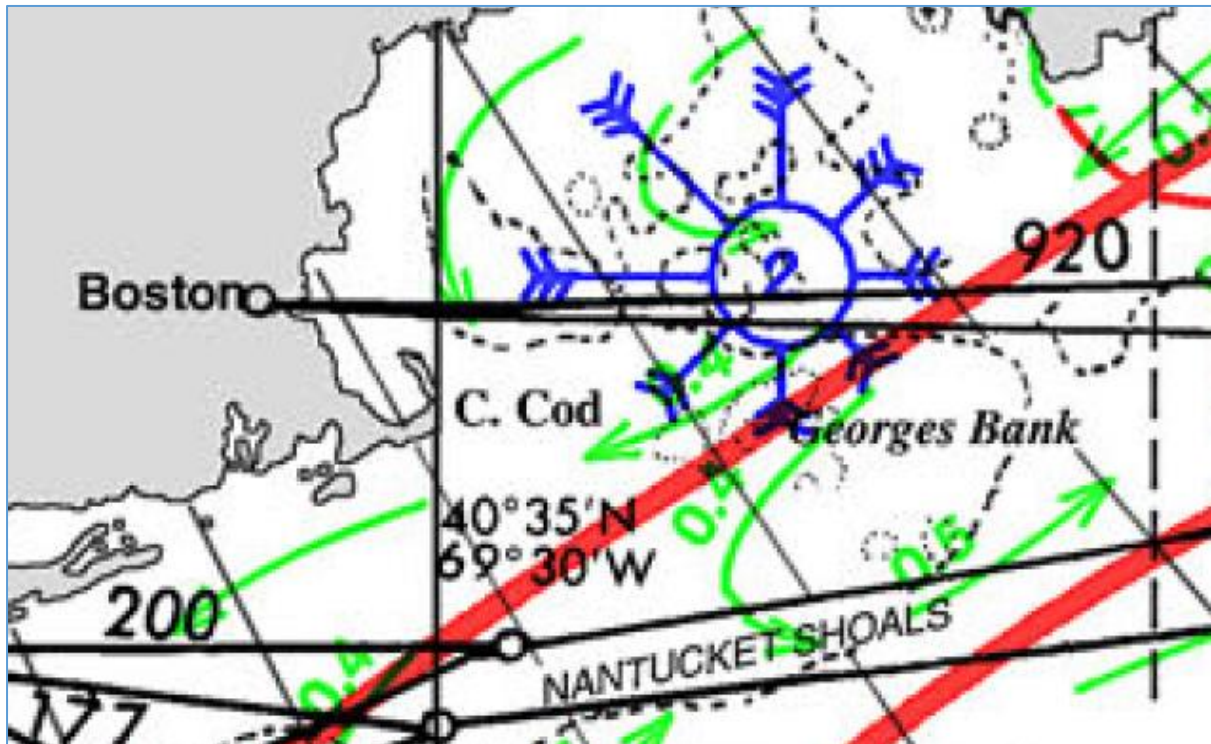According to the North Atlantic Pilot Chart, the winds over the waters off the coast of New England blow predominantly out of the North East Quadrant in March, and the icebergs drifting down on the cold Labrador current (red curve top right) travel as far South as the tip of Nova Scotia.
Force 5 on average. Brrrr!

So, it was pleasant to enjoy JLinc waxing lyrical about the natural beauty, clear waters and sky blue vista's of our racing area from the comfort of my sofa, as we prepared for this third episode of the SOL 40ft Championships in a steadily building apposite Nor'Easter!

To the race then. An hour or two before the start, psail in an email told me he didn't like these centrifugal routes. Whatever did he mean? Well, I guess he was comparing Cape Cod Bay and the Gulf of Maine to a washing machine. Venture too close in to an imaginary centre, you won't spin at all. Venture too far out, you'll be a slow sock compared to the quick nicks slightly closer in to that centre. And so it was, and qtVlm was giving us a good guide as to how wide to make that curve and when to go onto max VMG angles and when to gybe in to perhaps get inside the curve more.

qtVlm is good, but to optimise its initial routing it simplifies that routing first into a number of straight line segments, to then iteratively change the lengths and angles of those segments. If you set crank duration to 1 minute, in theory there is no solution that is going to be better by more than 1 minute. That's the theory, but of course that isn't always the case. However, sprints (and this one was going to be a sprint) are won and lost by much less than 1 minute. If you think about it then, it is going to make sense to lop the corners of those segments Qt proposes by sailing a smooth curve for two reasons:

- the curve will be a shorter distance
- curving you can avail of TWA commands, which incur no PL.
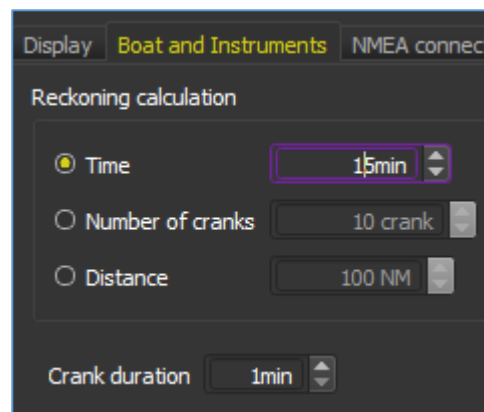
Now you can go a long way designing the optimum curve using Kipper1258's DC checker, but a long way takes a long time, and at the end of the day (mixed metaphors intended) you're as well off to just sail it HOT (hand-on-tiller) in true SOP (seat-of-pants) style, which is what I did, and I suspect Franci and psail too.

Franci did it best of all, but made what turned out be the mistake of gybing in to shore early for a second gybe further inside the curve and a shorter distance sailed. But the gybes cost him more PL than time won sailing the shorter course and when we met again on the lay for the southern tip of Monomoy Island, he was a server jump or two behind psail and I. Well tried but bad luck.

It remained a curvy kina race after that, but once in the lead and with no viable strategic options available other than to head for a pass though Woods Hole, all that was now required was concentration. I applied it.

To my consternation, that application of concentration was not equally and evenly distributed across the entire Ker40 fleet, and so it was that rival rumskib clambered back to cross the line in P19 in his SOTO, which is exactly what I managed with the SLOTHTO round The New Hebrides. But aner59 also in his SOTO flashed a 16th, putting him on level points with me, one point behind the always-so-hard-to-beat rumskib; all of us nevertheless 9, respectively 8 points adrift of javakeda, who has yet to try out his SLOWMO.

I am predicting now that java's last race will in fact be in the SLOWMO, as he confided in me he was applying a Casino Algorithm to help him with his choice of boat. He'll figure most people will have used all their fast boats when the last race comes round, so all he'll have to do is sail well to get a T10. Let's see.

1	javakeda	17
2	rumskib	25
3	bonknhoot	26
4	aner59	26
5	knockando60	30
6	psail	32
7	rafa	35
8	Hirilonde	35
9	Franci	36

And, by the way, Rod, this requires more than luck :)

I, for one, am loving the extra dimension that introduces that increased element of chance and judgment to this series!

bonknhoot / april 2017