

The boat

As I’ve said during the race in a chat talk with António (Zoe), the TP52 is the “boat”, by far the best of all sailboats in the large and growing SOL fleet. No other sailboat has a ratio of VMG’s targets per LOA like her, making IRL a sweet to any tactician and/or navigator to work out.

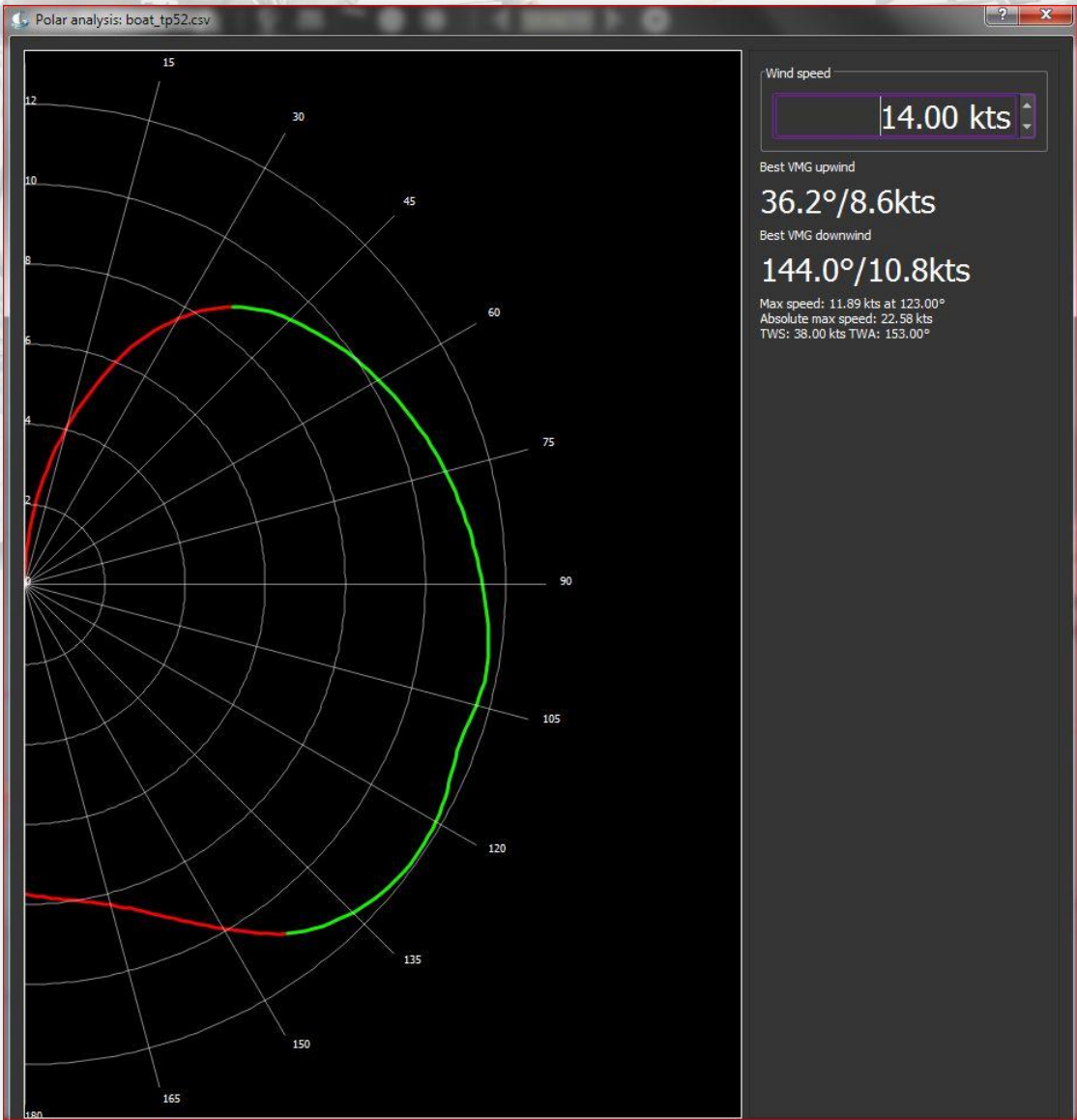
VMG													
twS	0	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24
twA													
0	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
24	0,000	0,899	1,926	3,191	4,533	5,236	5,583	5,911	6,228	6,407	6,493	6,586	6,694
27	0,000	1,025	2,165	3,517	4,911	5,636	5,989	6,323	6,645	6,830	6,920	7,021	7,139
30	0,000	1,154	2,401	3,817	5,227	5,954	6,303	6,632	6,950	7,133	7,228	7,335	7,462
33	0,000	1,284	2,630	4,089	5,479	6,187	6,520	6,833	7,136	7,313	7,410	7,524	7,657
36	0,000	1,414	2,853	4,327	5,663	6,331	6,637	6,924	7,203	7,367	7,464	7,582	7,721
39	0,000	1,542	3,061	4,528	5,772	6,383	6,655	6,907	7,153	7,302	7,399	7,520	7,663
42	0,000	1,656	3,238	4,666	5,785	6,340	6,580	6,799	7,015	7,156	7,258	7,385	7,530
45	0,000	1,742	3,357	4,722	5,703	6,208	6,425	6,621	6,817	6,957	7,071	7,205	7,350
48	0,000	1,775	3,390	4,689	5,556	6,013	6,213	6,392	6,572	6,713	6,838	6,975	7,118
51	0,000	1,757	3,339	4,575	5,358	5,769	5,955	6,122	6,291	6,432	6,560	6,697	6,835
54	0,000	1,700	3,222	4,394	5,112	5,481	5,656	5,815	5,975	6,114	6,242	6,375	6,507

SOL TP 52 VMGs Up targets values

129	0,000	1,853	3,537	4,891	5,807	6,400	6,926	7,452	7,976	8,459	8,931	9,444	9,985
132	0,000	1,888	3,621	5,047	6,050	6,694	7,275	7,860	8,444	8,998	9,546	10,127	10,728
135	0,000	1,902	3,662	5,141	6,218	6,925	7,560	8,202	8,847	9,491	10,142	10,805	11,469
138	0,000	1,894	3,658	5,163	6,300	7,084	7,775	8,472	9,175	9,931	10,718	11,482	12,211
141	0,000	1,855	3,594	5,107	6,299	7,174	7,913	8,655	9,408	10,279	11,211	12,089	12,896
144	0,000	1,769	3,452	4,971	6,238	7,201	7,973	8,737	9,520	10,464	11,509	12,505	13,422
147	0,000	1,622	3,216	4,752	6,138	7,175	7,951	8,705	9,485	10,424	11,499	12,604	13,680
150	0,000	1,489	2,987	4,500	5,955	7,081	7,860	8,599	9,366	10,240	11,273	12,445	13,675
153	0,000	1,457	2,891	4,287	5,645	6,905	7,722	8,481	9,259	10,076	11,036	12,198	13,486
156	0,000	1,442	2,830	4,117	5,361	6,677	7,545	8,352	9,168	9,954	10,839	11,932	13,187

SOL TP 52 VMGs Down targets values

The same happens here with our SOL TP and even further with some hopping tricks on this side of virtual sailing life.



It is amazing the care those responsible for the TP Class take with their boat where the level of any detail and hi-tech tweaking is sublime (TP 52 2017 Rules: <https://www.transpac52.org/dam/jcr:8e7e04ca-d159-495b-bc6c-9a8862c25e6e/2017%20TP52%20Rule.pdf>).

Just notice this. One of the discussions in the Class is about the reduction of the windage effect made by the rigging which made Quantum Team go for a Southern Spars' Razr rigging solution, claiming they got now a gain on the other competitors of 8 meters (!) in a normal upwind leg. And the list goes on.



TP 52 German *Platoon* - Cascais 52 Superseries, Portugal 2016

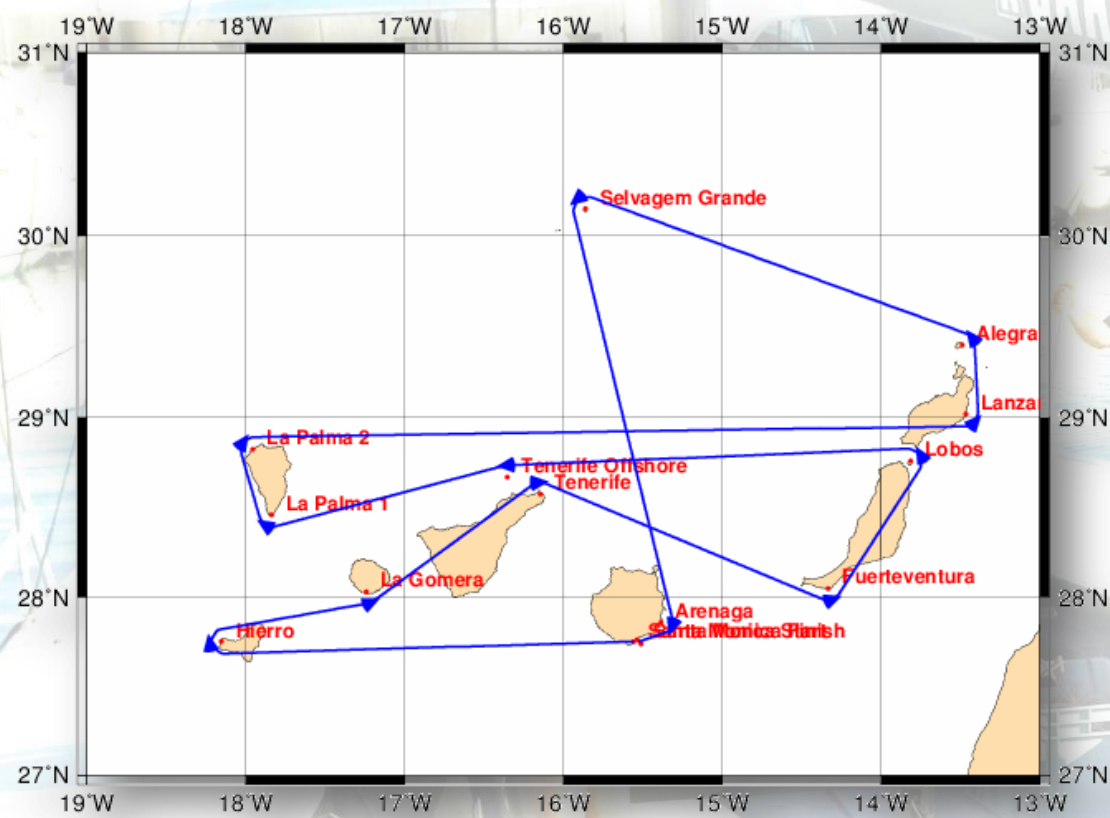


TP 52 American *Quantum* - Cascais52 Superseries, Portugal 2016

The race field and a tad of geopolitics

Practically all race is sailed in Spanish waters, exception made to the rounding in the Selvagem Grande tiny Island, situated to N of the Canarias Islands. In spite of an old dispute with Spain about the border extension of both countries *Exclusive Economic Zone* (EEZ), that tiny piece of “rock” is/will be part of our territory. Portugal.

More on this subject in the link: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exclusive_economic_zone_of_Portugal.



Remembering now the race NOR, a “useless” piece of information SOLers - myself included -sometimes *forget* to read, which usually is the first step to quickly transform a nice race to a big wreck of your dreams.

Essentially this a race with two consecutive “triangles”, being the first the path between Gran Canarias, El Hierro, a passage on the South side of La Gomera in the way to the North tip of Tenerife with the last (offset) vertice in the South tip of Fuerte Ventura. The second “triangle” starting at Fuerteventura South tip, rounding the North of the Island and closing it in the Tenerife Offshore race Mark making part of an East-West-East sailing between Fuerteventura, La Palma and back to Lanzarote. A final path goes to the Selvagem Grande island in the furthestmost North race field and back to the starting area in Gran Canaria.

Wind and GRIBs

With the prevailing Winds this time of the year in Canaries it’s granted that you’ll get all the three main sailing points: beam reach (alongside the race Latitude lines), close hauled in the South to North sailing in the four external Islands and a large downwind leg for the reaching the Finish Line.

With the usual topography this volcanic Islands have - narrow and tall - the Wind flow is largely influenced especially in the leeward sides with acceleration in-between Islands.

In my point of view the only upgrade detail this race requests is a more detailed Wind GRIB, leaving here my suggestion for future editions to use a *WRF Canaries* model, with a 0,075° x 0,075° resolution vs. the actual one with just 0,5° x 0,5°.

Routing it

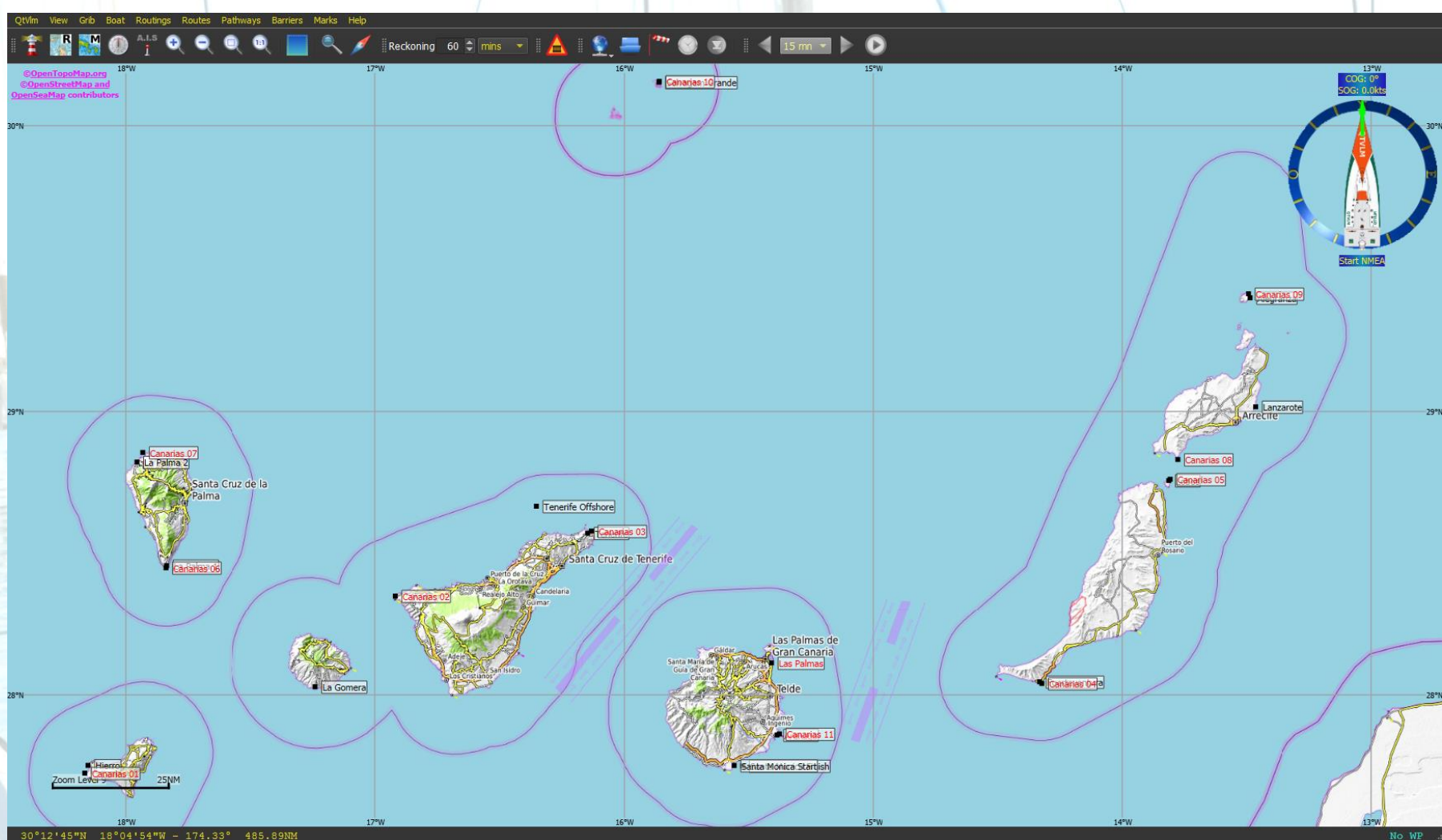
For routing purposes I solved the race geometrics inside qT using #11 race Marks as shown in the next picture for laying out #5 separate Legs.

I’ve made only two full routings per day (10:30 hrs and 16:30 hrs UTC) and took profit of good sleeping time during the night, exception made to some rounding action in particular moments.

My strong advice now is: forget the new qT gimmick named “*Pathway*”, namely, and start learning how to make a routing by hand. At that point you go where you want/need, not the other way around.

More important, in that process you quickly step in the learning process of “reading the wind”, something that with the automatically and extensively use of router programs you’ll tend to get only a big blank reservoir in that particular knowledge. Alias, one of the keys for wining any regatta is precisely understand the wind and anticipate it.

That aspect was going to play an important role just 0,5 hr after the gun. We’ll see it in the next round.

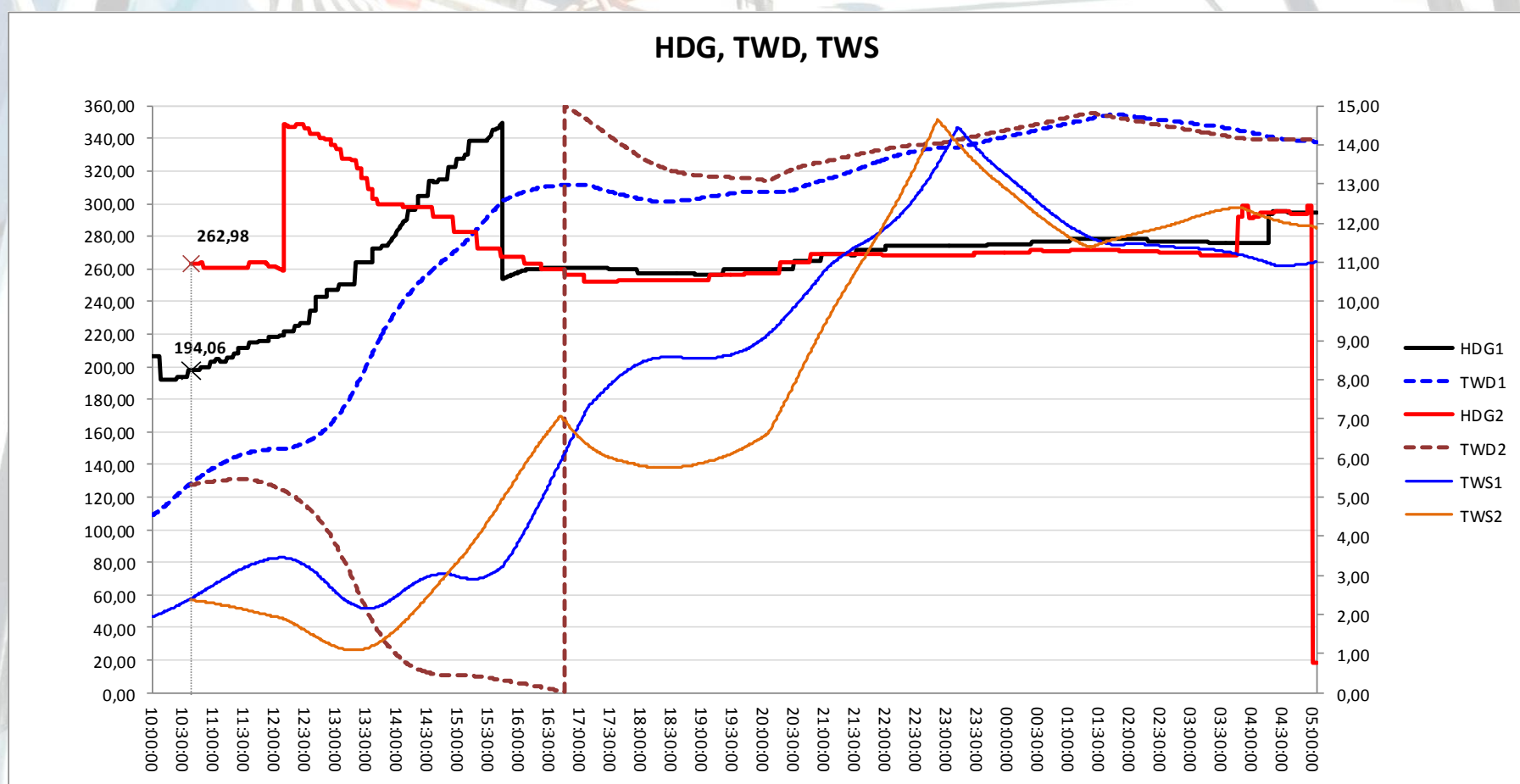


qtVlm chart plotter for with the race field

The race Start

On the following chart is shown the back analysis for the trio of values (HDG; TWD; TWS) obtained in the first routing with the 04:30 hrs WF (the one available and used for routing the race start at 10:00 hrs UTC) and the following one, i.e., after the 10:30 hrs UTC WF release.

In the left (vertical) axis you have “Degrees” and on the right one “Kts”, with Time Steps of half an hour on the horizontal axis.



In the pre-race analysis we could foresee the Wind was going to rotate strongly clockwise (aprox. 200°, dashed blue line) in a very small breeze inside the range of 2-3,5 Kts (continuous blue line).

So, the plan was simple: do the rotation but, further South, get more WP, reach some decent speed to escape before being stopped at a position SW of the Island, first tack (15:45 hrs UTC) and sail to Hierro between a close to a beam reach to maintain boat speed.

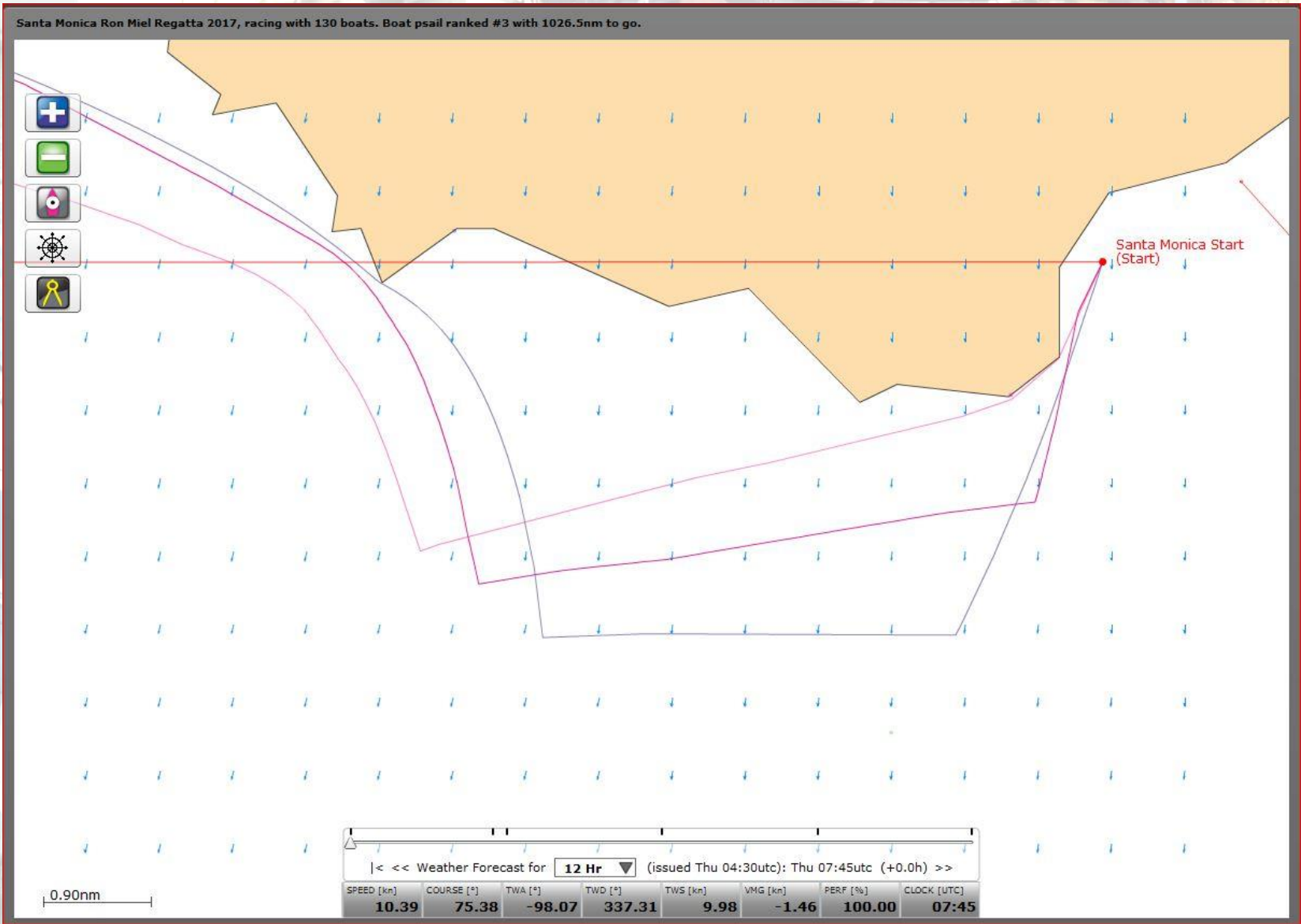
Initial advice from qT was to make a start a little hot on TWA (average -96°, with Wind blowing from Port) for the first seven minutes of race, and even before passing, at some distance, the Punta de Maspalomas (South tip of Gran Canaria), slowly tighten the sheets till 13:30 hrs (with an average TWA = 70°) in order to get the most of a small increase in pressure further South while performing the rotation with the Wind to the first race tack.

Looking to the graph we see that, just before the release of the 10:30 hrs UTC WF we were supposed to be on a HDG = 194,06° and slowly continue rotating with the Wind till a programmed tack for 15:45:00 hrs UTC.

The new WF came and it caught some of us more than 60° under our right heading, above all in a stretching no pressure area (from NE to SW) and a growing cross section area (from NW to SE), with a large tendency to go under 1,00 Kts in TWS.
To get this scenario even worse the wind decided to shift the other way round (anti-clockwise, **brown dashed line** in the graph).

That was the reason - please look to the middle path in the next picture - why I've made an abrupt change of direction immediately as I saw it coming. The skippers that went sooner W/SW like *theonetruthpath*, *BS1*, *Svein*, *Zoe* and others after rounding Punta de Maspalomas got an immediate position advantage as we had all not only to tack sooner (now at 12:10 hrs UTC) but start rotating ASAP to NE after the tack to get decent pressure in the West side of Gran Canaria.

The boats that only latter perceived the dramatic change in the Wind conditions for the next couple of hours and didn't changed immediately direction got serious trouble to escape the large wind hole that quickly established. *Rumskib* was one of them and soon I extended the gap to him.



Top path - *theonetruthpath*
Middle path - *psail*
Down path - *rumskib*

At the time I've made a "radio" to Svein commenting that, in spite of "*not throwing yet the towel*" the outcome of the race was probably taken. Yes. Because with the lead the top five boats already got, it had to be a strong sequence of negative circumstances to change that status. Anyhow, it was also too soon to stop believing in a better final.

Recovering time

Well, we had plenty of time to recover and also some mistakes to make and/or take profit. *Rumskib* skipper said at the Finish Line that the *result of this race was decided by the skipper who took fewer errors*. True but, incomplete. Mind you that you can do an entire race without making one error whatsoever and, still don't reach the FL in the front.

Exception made to the Fuerteventura East Coast crossing all the others Islands were sailed in full TR mode, i.e., close as you can get to land and tight turns on the corners, sometimes so close that in La Palma I didn't avoid scrubbing the rocks before the first tack in that upwind leg. The Fuerteventura leg was made during the night on full DC's uploaded from the routing with the previous 16:30 hrs WF. You can say luck was with me but, I also took some measures to have the proper safety gaps to the Coast's Islands sailed during "night watch", or to say, while sleeping. Keeping a fresh head is sometimes much more important than to have the top position but go for the decision moments with an exhausted mind.

For more than 2/3 of the overall race *theonetrupath*, *BS1* and *Azur* occupied the top #3 positions. Slowly I recovered positions being the first attack made in the start of the second race night during the downwind leg between Tenerife and Furteventura. The strategy was easy, go for pressure and boat speed. It started paying.

Equal strategy was taken for the East-West-East legs, but with a particular emphasis for angle for the return part between Tenerife Offshore and Lanzarote.

If my memory doesn't betray me I've reached Lanzarote in second place and left it leading the pack.

Again, I went on this NE leg for pressure and this time with a favorable angle, going a bit hotter for the Selvagem ("Savage" in English) that was rounded during the night on TR mode - at the time the clock alarm helped - and DC's till the next morning.

Last Leg - Downwind

The last leg, full downwind was very interesting alternating with moments under TWA VMG targets for speed and slower ones above the TWA limit angles.

The "inside option", more direct but with four or more gybes to do, wasn't never an option. Here the right move was taking the "outside option", meaning sailing E/SE and rotate to SE in order to reach soon as possible the stronger WP zone that was slowly moving SE.

Second, to perceive the right moment associated with a tiny TWD change to make the first gybe and get closer to the FL.

Rumskib, at the time already in second position, went 1:48 minutes sooner for her gybe, with an immediate implication on being the first to leave the good pressure zone and starting sooner to lose precious angle, so the gap between us went up.

When she came back I gybed in the "vertical", entering again sooner in the good WP and angle zone while the gap continued to increase.

At the time the fleet was spread to West and East of our "vertical" and naturally the leaderboard changed during that period.

The last gybe for the FL was again made by *rumskib* a bit early, to my mind but probably the strategy was to push me for losing sooner angle and pressure.

One day I'll ask him.

I finished in TWA, for the lowest end of the line and then ... my inside light "blackened out" (bzzzzz).

This race was already a SOL classic but, for a lot of good reason, it was a pity it didn't had more boats to race it.

I thank SOL and race sponsors *TheHorn* & *TheAlice* for all the work and personal care invested in this superb race.

I dedicate this win to someone I think all SOLers have a great debt of gratitude: *RainbowChaser* skipper.

A Big Hug to all.
O&O

João/psail

26.April2.2017

