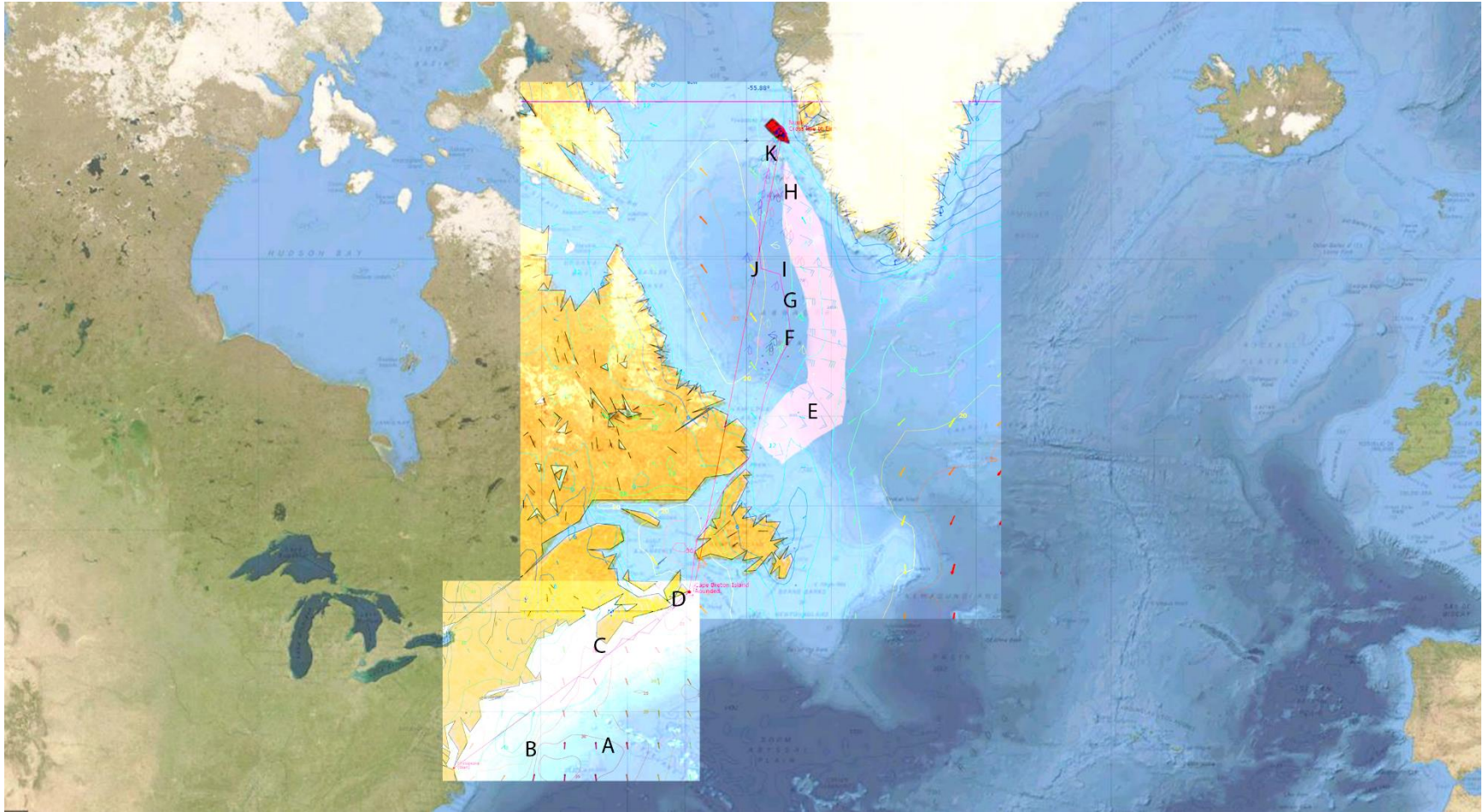


RED DOT 2017 LEG 1 USA TO GREENLAND
RACE REPORT



The first part of the route [B] due to technical reasons is not visible on the chart. Please see capital letters descriptions below (page 2).

I had a pretty good start (2nd May 10:00z, Chesapeake, USA). After the start, the route led us E into the Sargasso Sea closer and closer to the area of higher wind speeds. I monitored the movement of some well-respected yachts to find out that they are sailing further E past my initial point for a gybe. I trust my instruments so it made me to take a more detailed look at my calculations and corresponding routing figures. After closer examination and assessment of the situation, I liked the idea to position my boat even further E and closer to the higher pressure gradient **[A]** than initially assumed.

I sailed my own route and prepared myself for the first major maneuver during this race. I gybed further E in relation to some of my reference boats around noon on the 2nd of May **[B]**. Each of the new weather update was confirming that it was a good idea. Definitely, I was in the leading pack.

I expected some intense tacking to start in about 24 hours and it happened on time. Later, on the 3rd of May around 2200z, not far from Nova Scotia **[C]**, I decided to position my yacht to windward just a bit ahead of rumskib. I did not have to wait long for his reaction. As I saw the situation at that time and according to my understanding there were two routes to Cape Breton Island. My optimal route consisted of four tacks, the other consisted of two. My understanding was that at the beginning rumskib was trying to attack me to leeward. In response, I abandoned my optimal route for a moment and was sailing higher to the wind and later I even went to VMG. It allowed me to sail my optimal route. It looked like rumskib decided to follow the other one.

On the 4th of May, at 11:29z jf44 posted Google Earth [picture](#) from the race. I was in the lead **[D]**. Moreover, I presumed to have an opportunity to reach earlier more favorable winds in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. As SCARABOCCHIO and Dingo were pressing hard, I was constantly monitoring the situation on the water and at the same time trying to find time to analyze in details the routes through the Labrador Sea. To my eye there were three: West, Center and East **[E]**.

Due to some reasons I abandoned the West one. The Center had a better angle and looked more consistent, the East offered a better pressure through the most part of the route. I was sailing in the Strait of Belle Isle and had to commit. I reminded myself about one rule I read about: "The rule in SOL is 99% of the time angle is more valuable than pressure even in light breeze [...]" written by WINSTON_4 - much more experienced SOLer than me - in his report from Simushir SPRINT race. I went for the Center route. With the initial exception of blubalou, this looked like the route favored by most of racers.

After rounding the Cape of St. Charles, the route led into the zone of reduced wind speed **[F]**. On the 5th I checked again my data and the Center route was favored. However, the East route still offered some attacking possibilities for my competitors.

On the 6th in the morning two gybes on the Center route to finish materialized. I decided to prolong the time to my first gybe as long as possible and I sailed "the longest isochrone" **[G]**. By doing so I kept the East route still open. Should the wind conditions for the East route (the weak point of this route were the lower wind speeds toward the shore at the very end of the route **[H]**) change with the new weather update, I should be able to react. I also calculated that by prolonging the time to gybe, I should not lose more than about 3 minutes 46 seconds to my closest competitors. At that time my lead in terms of time was about 15 minutes.

During the last Volvo Ocean Race I got interested in satellite pictures so on the 7th in the morning I checked the latest available one for the race area. To my current understanding the present real weather situation would influence the initial conditions that would be used by NOAA supercomputers for their next forecast run. I made myself almost sure that any change to the last part of the East route is rather unlikely – weak winds will prevail. I completely abandoned the East route and decided to make two major maneuvers **[I, J]**. I sailed slightly leeward to SCARABOCCHIO and Dingo. I also tried my best to position the yacht for a polar hop **[K]** expected just before the finish. I crossed the finish line (Nuuk, Greenland) on the 8th of May at 00:02:45z.