

I am a 71 year old retired Royal Navy Officer where I was a Sea King helicopter Observer/Navigator. I have been sailing IRL since I was 15. To start with dinghies but later on Yachts. I now am a part owner of a 1979 Beneteau First 30 which we sail out of Falmouth. Mainly cruising but with the occasional race.

I started virtual racing with Virtual Regatta about 10 years ago and have done 3 Clipper races, 2 Volvo, 2 Vendee and 3 Jules Verne. As well as other races. I became interested in the Golden Globe when I heard about it on our local news. I even went out solo in our boat to see Sir Robin Knox Johnson sail Suhaili into Falmouth. I then took the advantage of walking along the pontoon looking at the entrants.

It was not until after the start that I noticed that Sailonline was available to sail the race. So I started late on 5th July back in 309 position.

My strategy for most round the world races is to hug the African coast to the Cape Verde Islands and then cut out West to get around the St Helena High and at the same time get South. The conditions for this race however meant a slightly more central Atlantic dive. By the time I was South of Cape of Good Hope I was in the top 100. But something like 500 miles behind Dingo. That increased to 700 miles at one stage. I was about 67th by the stop in Tasmania.

After the 90 minute stop stage 2 started. The Southern Ocean is not much more than a rail line with little chance to overtake. I knew that my only chance of making ground would be in the Atlantic.

Once past the Falklands (to the East) I aimed to pass close to Recife in Brazil and then either due North or slightly West to pass around the Azores depending on the position and size of the Azores High. I soon found that I was the most westerly boat and was actually surprised that more were not following the same route. Sure enough the High Pressure systems were to the East and many boats got caught up in them. However, although getting around the weather systems well, I ended up a little bit too far to the West to get onto the podium.

I did use QtVlm as a router but not until over a month into the race as I found out about available tools. Routers are good but you have to set realistic aiming points and not the final line when you are still at Cape Horn.

I have enjoyed this experience with SOL and will be taking part in future races. But only the long-distance ones as racing around cans was in my dinghy days.

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