

This race has us sailing off the coast of Oman, passing through the Hormuz Strait to reach the finish. Although it is 21nm wide at the narrowest point, ships are limited to 2nm-wide channels to pass, and even that isn't guaranteed as Iran's law has provisions that can stop ships from using the channels. Luckily, in Sailonline we don't need to deal with certain elements like politics and shallow water, so we can sail anywhere that isn't land.

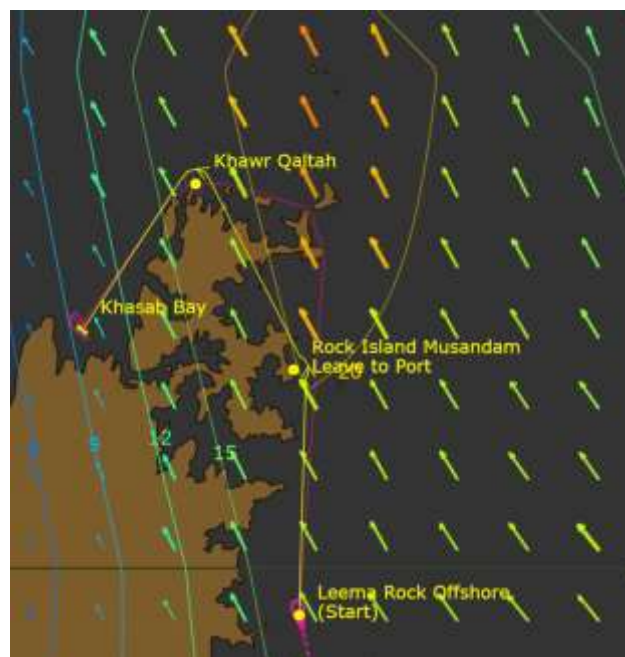
 RainbowChaser 19:08

A British oil tanker has been seized by Iran... the Stena Impero ... see her on AIS here: <https://www.marinetraffic.com/en/ais/home/centerx:56.3/centery:26.8/zoom:10>

Furthermore, since this is a timed race, it means that you essentially choose your winds by adjusting your start time accordingly (starting on a DC sets your time when that DC actually fires). Even the Goddess of Windholes can't complain about getting trapped in one of these, since the Wx is unlikely to suddenly bring one of these around within the 5-6 hours of the race of your choosing!

The generalised commands to be sent for each attempt at this race are as follows (exact intervals depend on the wind speed and direction for the attempt):

(Your choice of Start) cc	4.000
(+2.5 to 3 hours) cc	341.500
(+20 mins approx.) cc	289.100
(+17 mins approx.) cc	286.200
(+18 mins approx.) cc	271.000
(+14 mins approx.) cc	236.300
(+12 mins approx.) cc	214.500
(+75 to 90 mins) cc	211.000

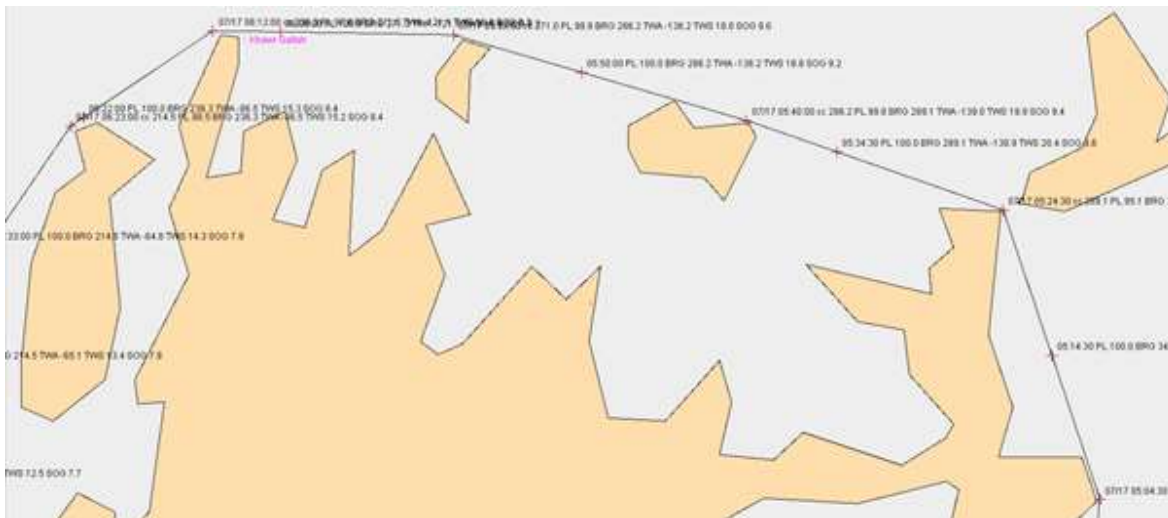


The last command is entered here, with its time set as the expected time of reaching the finish line, so that it is possible to approximate the time for that attempt through the DC checker. If this expected time exceeded ~6 hours then it wasn't worth making the attempt.

In terms of winds, what one is looking for is winds of maximum possible strength coming from the Southeast. For much of the time prior to 17 July, the winds were light and variable, which is bad if shooting for the fastest time. However, there have been several occasions where the wind picked up and came from the South or Southeast: the Arabian mornings of 8, 10 and 13 July, as well as a general improvement starting 17 July.

Apart from small rounding errors (in terms of the angle), there should not be a need to stray away from this particular "path". While it is possible to improve the VMG to the tailwind by setting a pair of TWA commands, the boat would probably have a better VMC on that given stretch with a better wind direction.

I treated this race much like the Practice Races in that I would usually set all the commands several hours ahead of the actual attempt at the race, except in this instance the starting command doesn't have to be at 6:00:00pm UTC. However, there were certain constraints that I had to face. Specifically, while I can set the commands to begin at any time, I only get access to the 10.30pm UTC Wx for any given (working) day, which is valid until 4.30am UTC. I would not be at home to gain access to that next Wx to adjust any DCs set.



This meant that I either have to set my DCs such that the last turn takes place no later than 4.30am UTC, or sail in the next Wx which naturally increases the risk of a BBQ/missed finish line. It doesn't take much change in the winds to do that, since we would generally want to sail as close to land as possible especially near Khawr Qaltah. And in a timed race, since you can only get your boat towed back to Start upon finishing for another attempt, the BBQ could be a double whammy if it makes you miss the optimal winds for the next attempt! (Due to the nature of how the marks are set up, at least there is negligible risk of missing those)

Unfortunately, it seems that the best winds (when they are blowing) always take place in the Arabian morning on working days. This was evident in the race attempt on 10 July, where (starting at midnight UTC) I had sailed the perfect path throughout the race, and even momentarily got first place, only to drop to 20th by that evening.

This can also be shown through the DCs that I ran just before leaving for work on 17 July (using the 16 July, 10.30pm Wx), in each instance resulting in the best path possible:

Leaderboard for Hormuz TIMED Race 2019

Hormuz TIMED Race 2019, racing with 131 boats.

Rankings: [SYC ranking - 2019 TRQ3](#) - [2019 TRCH](#) - [2019 SUPERSOLer](#)

1-50 51-100 101-150

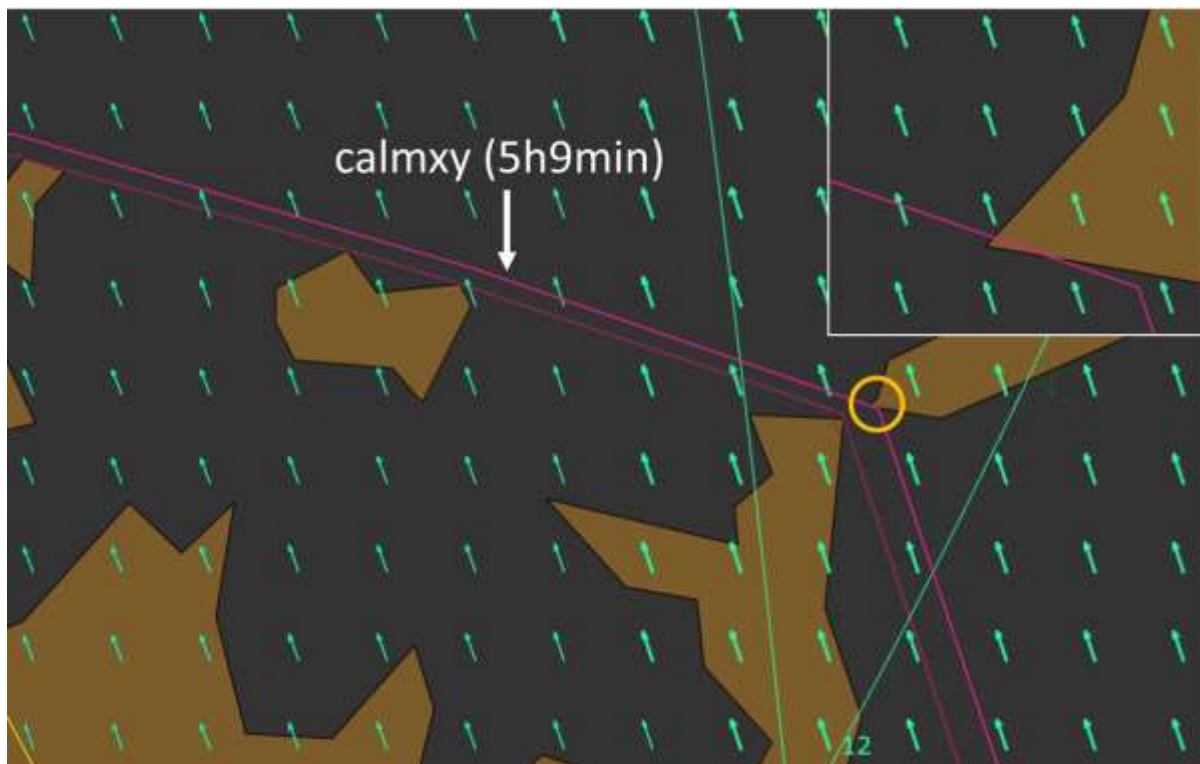
Rank	Boat Name	Boat Type	DTG On Course	Start Time (UTC)	Finish Time (UTC)
1	calmxy	X-35 OD	0 5:30:41	2019-07-10 00:00:05	2019-07-10 05:30:47
2	intermezzo	X-35 OD	0 5:32:39	2019-07-09 23:57:49	2019-07-10 05:30:29
3	Bogtrotter123	X-35 OD	0 5:40:18	2019-07-09 23:22:31	2019-07-10 05:02:49
4	Cbragista	X-35 OD	0 5:43:52	2019-07-09 22:21:16	2019-07-10 04:05:09
5	bacatabi	X-35 OD	0 5:49:58	2019-07-09 22:48:14	2019-07-10 04:38:13

Using known Wx			Using optimal winds		
2019/07/17 00:30:00	cc	4.000	2019/07/17 02:30:00	cc	4.000
2019/07/17 03:14:00	cc	341.500	2019/07/17 05:04:30	cc	341.500
2019/07/17 03:33:30	cc	289.100	2019/07/17 05:24:30	cc	289.100
2019/07/17 03:50:00	cc	286.200	2019/07/17 05:40:00	cc	286.200
2019/07/17 04:06:00	cc	271.000	2019/07/17 05:58:00	cc	271.000
2019/07/17 04:20:00	cc	236.300	2019/07/17 06:12:00	cc	236.300
2019/07/17 04:32:00	cc	214.500	2019/07/17 06:23:00	cc	214.500
2019/07/17 05:45:00	cc	211.000	2019/07/17 07:38:00	cc	211.000

Wow, that's a 7-minute time savings that can be realised! Given that my next best time (then) was a further 15 minutes back, I decided to go for the 2.30 start.

Rafa and several others who also started around 2-3am UTC, 17 July would later show that the winds had actually improved even further, thus allowing times of ~5h3min to be set using

the same winds that I had been sailing in. These improved winds did cause me to briefly BBQ after that second command (although thankfully in a way that still enabled the remaining commands to bring me to the finish - it should be noted that if this were a Practice Race then this may have resulted in a 360/DQ).



And finally, how several of my attempts have ended in a BBQ which the subsequent commands wouldn't get me out of. Perhaps it's related to those Practice Races (especially since mid-June) where I often BBQ'd, missed the practice marks or otherwise didn't finish? But it's pleasantly surprising that those attempts that reached the finish, did actually happen.

Boat calmxy's attempts as of 20 July (effectively ranked 14 as rafa and goddess each have two attempts in the top 15 - rank 1 is included for comparison):

Rank	Boat Name	Boat Type	DTG	On Course	Start Time (UTC)	Finish Time (UTC)
1	<i>rafa</i>	X-35 OD	0	5:02:13	2019-07-17 02:19:55	2019-07-17 07:22:08
16	calmxy	X-35 OD	0	5:09:25	2019-07-17 02:30:06	2019-07-17 07:39:31
25	calmxy	X-35 OD	0	5:11:34	2019-07-20 00:30:03	2019-07-20 05:41:37
62	calmxy	X-35 OD	0	5:29:23	2019-07-13 02:30:01	2019-07-13 07:59:24
65	calmxy	X-35 OD	0	5:30:41	2019-07-10 00:00:05	2019-07-10 05:30:47
113	calmxy	X-35 OD	0	6:18:21	2019-07-08 13:15:03	2019-07-08 19:33:25
189	calmxy	X-35 OD	0	12:43:51	2019-07-19 02:00:03	2019-07-19 14:43:55
202	calmxy	X-35 OD	0	16:00:46	2019-07-18 01:30:04	2019-07-18 17:30:51
206	calmxy	X-35 OD	0	18:09:02	2019-07-09 01:30:05	2019-07-09 19:39:07
230	calmxy	X-35 OD	0	3d, 0:00:38	2019-07-13 15:30:00	2019-07-16 15:30:39