

## **The Tall Ships Races 2020 - Race 3**

### **Pre-race**

Bay of Biscay, a Clipper 240 with one of the most demanding polars I've sailed in SOL, a buoy offshore from Ouessant/Ushant (I learned on this race that this was the same island), a finish called Dunkirk but very far from Dunkirk, very shifty winds and unreliable weather forecasts. This outlook is shouting to me: "Don't sail this race!". But, on the other hand, these are Tall Ships, I have a chance to compete for the series and SOL is fun!

### **The race**

Nice start off the coast of La Coruña, pretty much downwind with a nice speed. However, the troubles were ahead.

First challenge was to negotiate the deep polar hop and start the beat across the Bay of Biscay. I kept to the east of the fleet in a very good position (so I thought) until the next wx came. This one favoured a much western position, so I tacked and went behind most of the leaders to the west of me. brandystrega also tacked and, surprisingly, most of the fleet kept going east.

By the time we tacked again, brandystrega and I were the west of the fleet and again I thought I was (again!) non a very good position. We kept beating to the approach of the tack to the Ushant buoy. Unfortunately, I kept it too long and again I was on the east of the fleet but this time I was not optimistic on my position. Ahead was a big and deep wind hole with another big wind shift, another polar hop and a final broad reach to the Ushant buoy.

brandystrega, that kept his boat west of the fleet unlike me, got to the buoy first and had a clear advantage for the final leg to the finish at not Dunkirk. As for my beautiful vessel, I rounded Ushant outside of the top 10 and with a grim outlook for the race and series. knockando60 and rafa were well inside the top 10 and in contention for the victory. Me.. gone.

Nevertheless, the last leg was to be sailed and preferably well. We kept on going. First beat on starboard to the coast of England. I kept my route closer to the wind than most and I tacked earlier. To my surprise, when approaching the last tack, I was in a good position and with a possibility of a podium. A very unexpected outcome. Tacking the last time to the line, I had a real chance of getting a podium but knockando60 and NagaJolokia covered well and beat me. A third place was anyway a very good result for me. Unfortunately NagaJolokia missed the line and I got the 2nd place.

### **The series**

The last race of this series was the deciding one. I was one point behind knockando60 needing to beat him. He won the race without giving me any chance. Congratulations knockando60!