

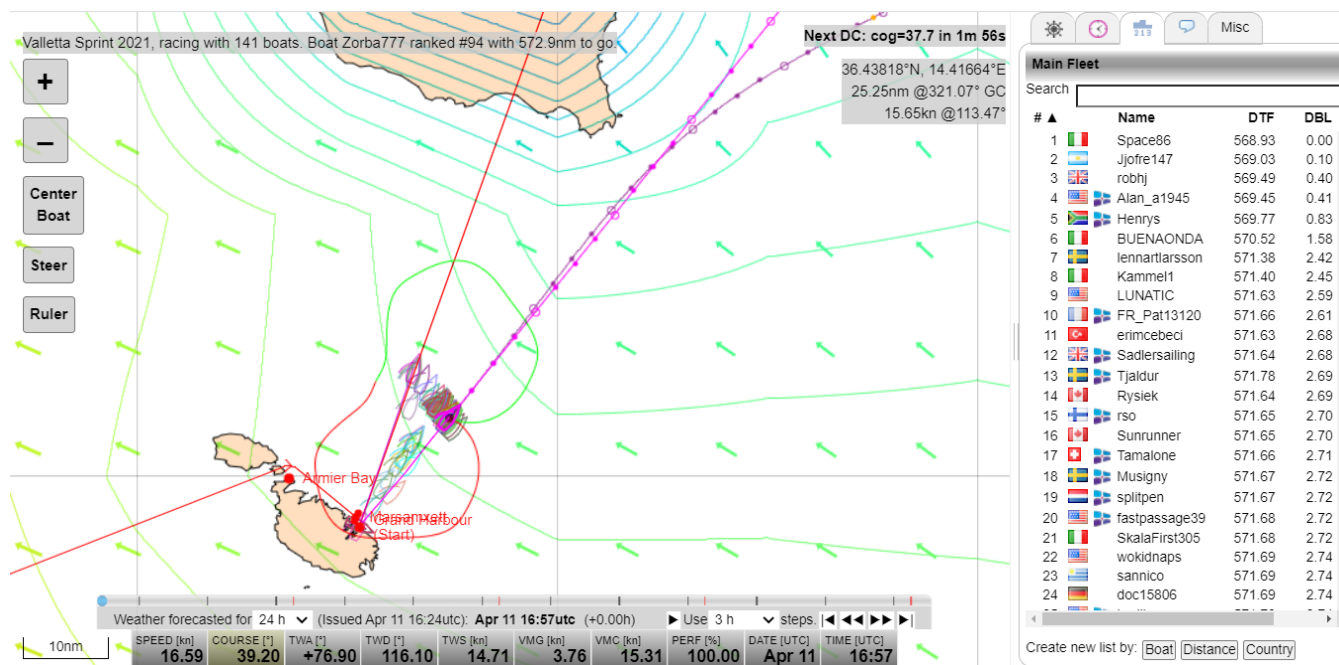
# Valletta Sprint 2021 – Report by Zorba777

A “sprint” race of 588NM :-) Explanation: reportedly a SOL classic that dates back to the time when there was no sprint category yet, and always kept that name (my suggestion: just keep keeping it). I like the humor and it made me think of a “Marathon” that would of course be a proper sprint race. Watch the proposals space.

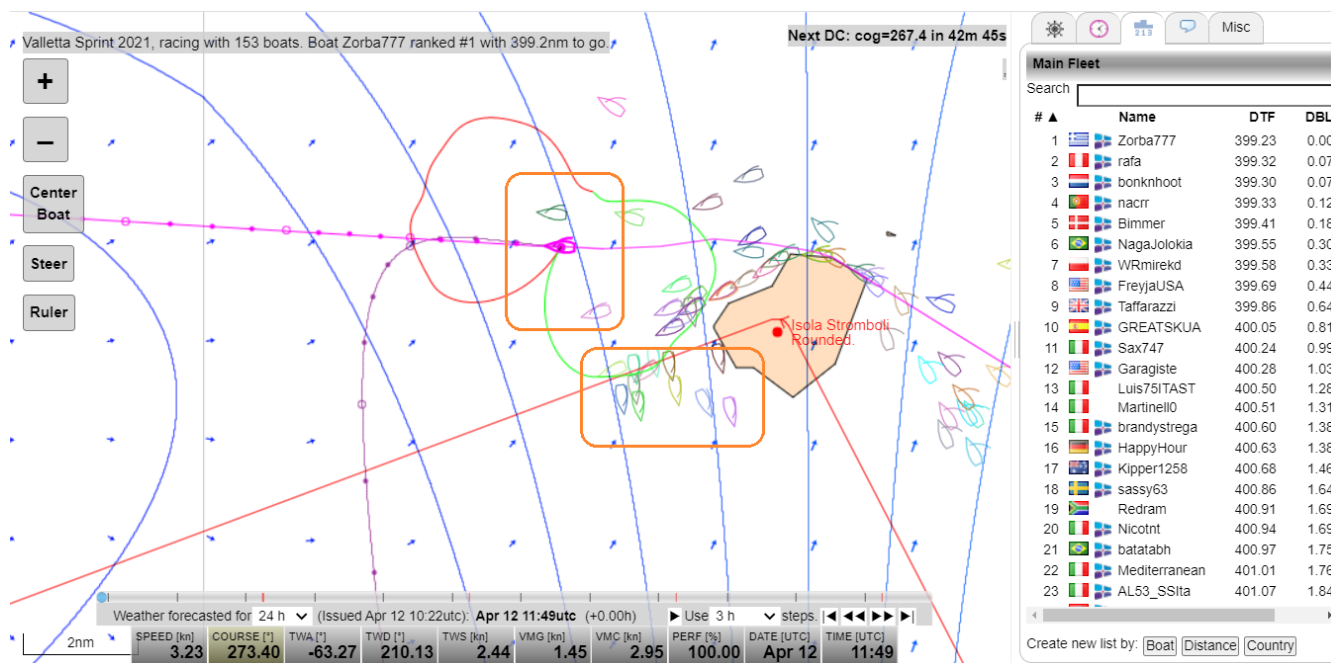
Anyway, I couldn't resist a tour around Sicily; weather has smiled on me before in that part of the world. And once you pass through Mess-ina strait everything is possible, from volcanoes erupting, to giants throwing stones at your boat, to winds dying out in front of you.. Flexibility is key and trusting your router here can be more risky than trusting Don Corleone.

The weather map looked ominous from the start. First boat at Favignana island waypoint would have excellent chances to bring it to the finish. Here is how it all happened:

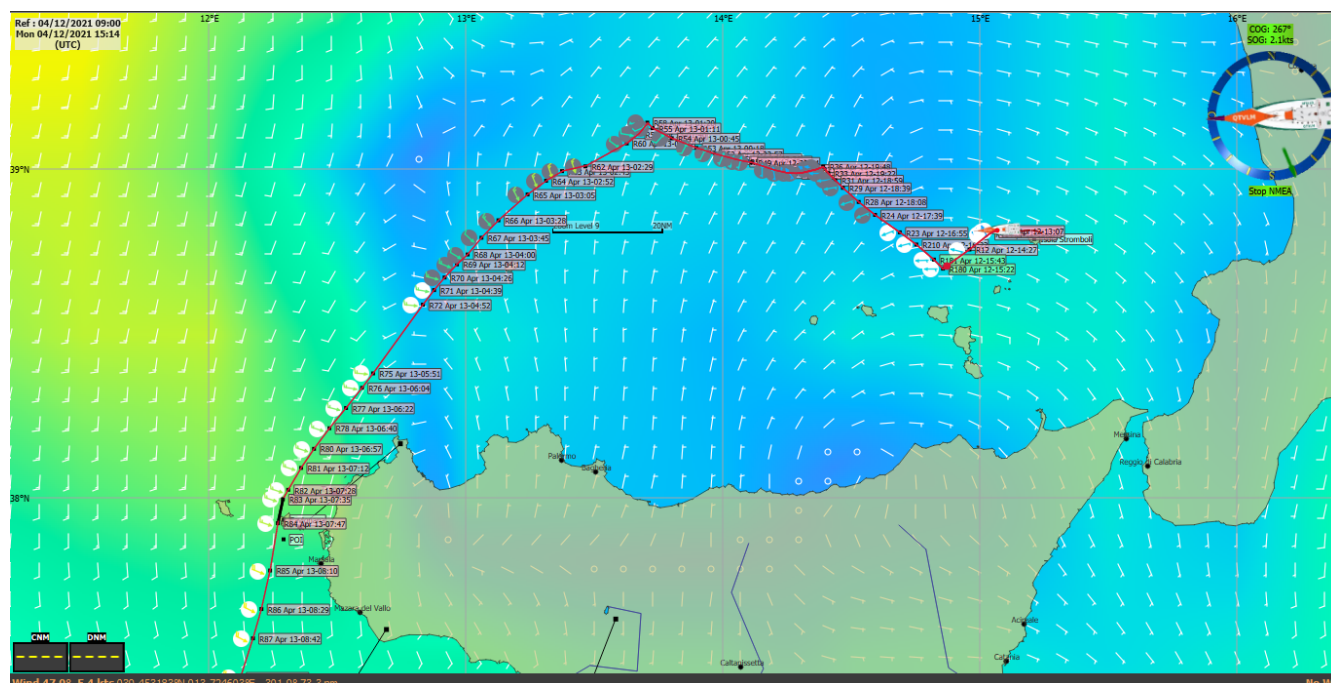
## 1 – Start in Malta in fair winds:



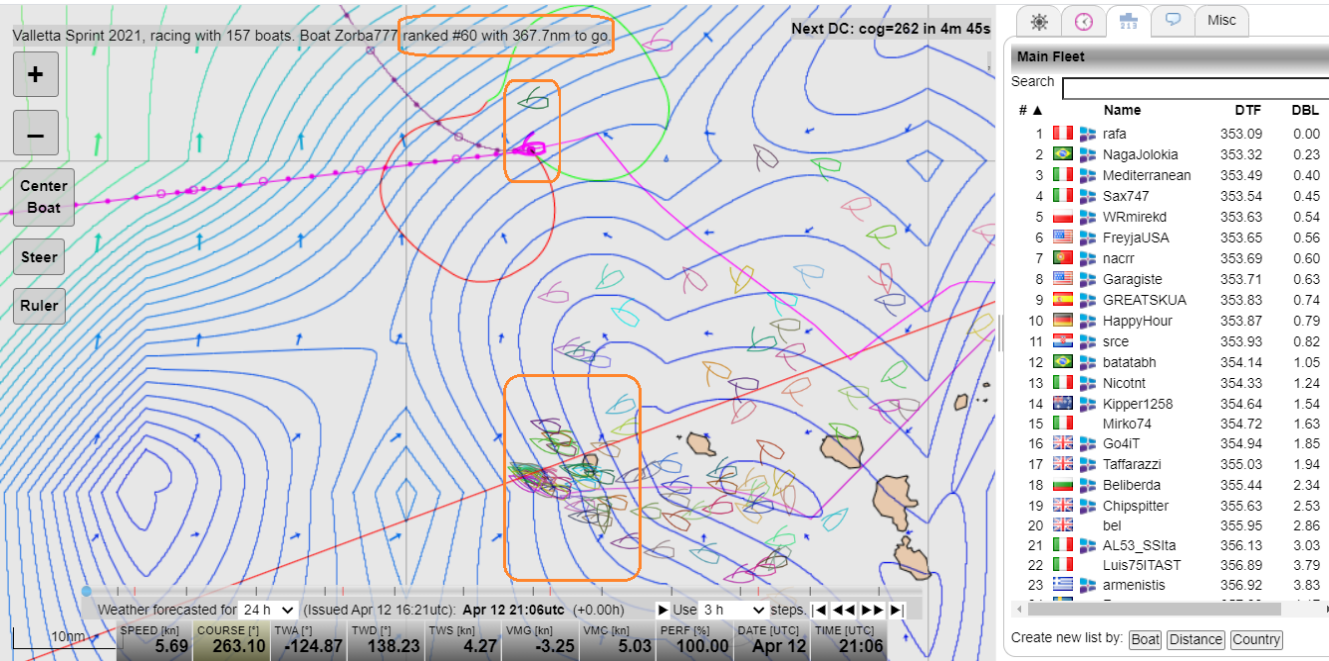
2 – An overnight gybe-fest on DCs towards Messina didn't serve me too well. Lost almost a NM on the top boats already and it was @Rafa to come first out of Messina if I remember well. An important WX update came right as we rounded Stromboli, so there was not much time to decide on strategy. My routing showed a more Northern route to get to fast winds as quick as possible. But to my surprise all boats in front of me turned South after Stromboli, except for @Bonknhoot, who also went straight West. @Bimmer opted for a go-between. Keeping our boat moving became the main challenge:



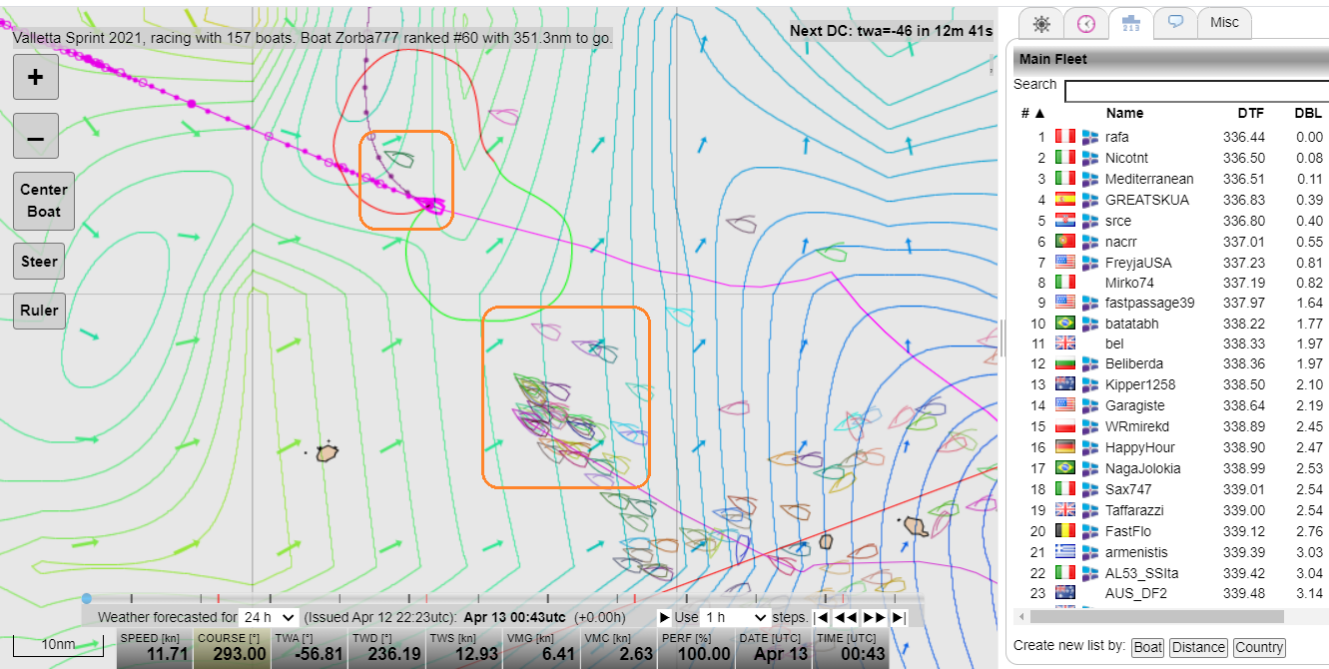
This was sailing plan at Stromboli, predicting a pass at Favignana around 07:45 next morning:



3 – The next WX made my routing 50 minutes quicker. That started looking good. The main group got stuck in very slow winds. Bonknhoot and Zorba777 kept a bit more speed and the zone with faster winds was not far away. It may look as if I had a good position in this screen. But Jan took optimal advantage of being in a bit more pressure further to the North:



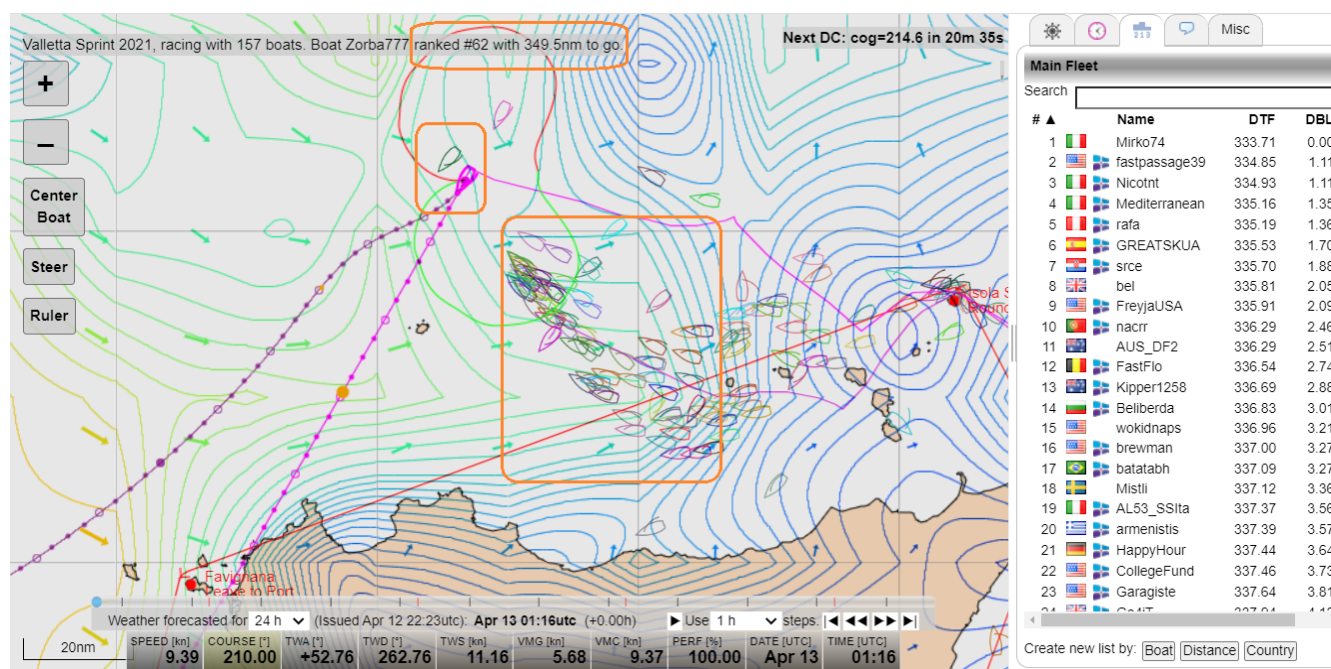
4 – Setting up for our tack towards Favignana island:



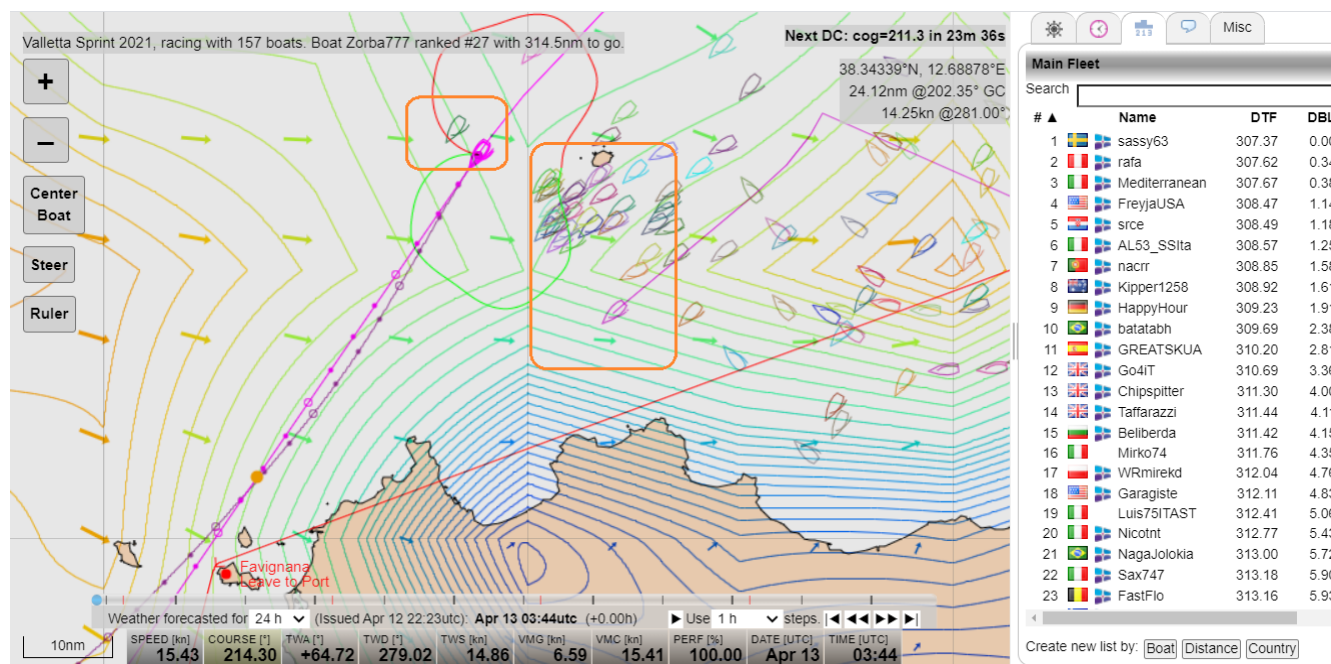


5 – A little midnight inspection to check on the boat. Yep, SOLers never sleep, as the saying goes :)

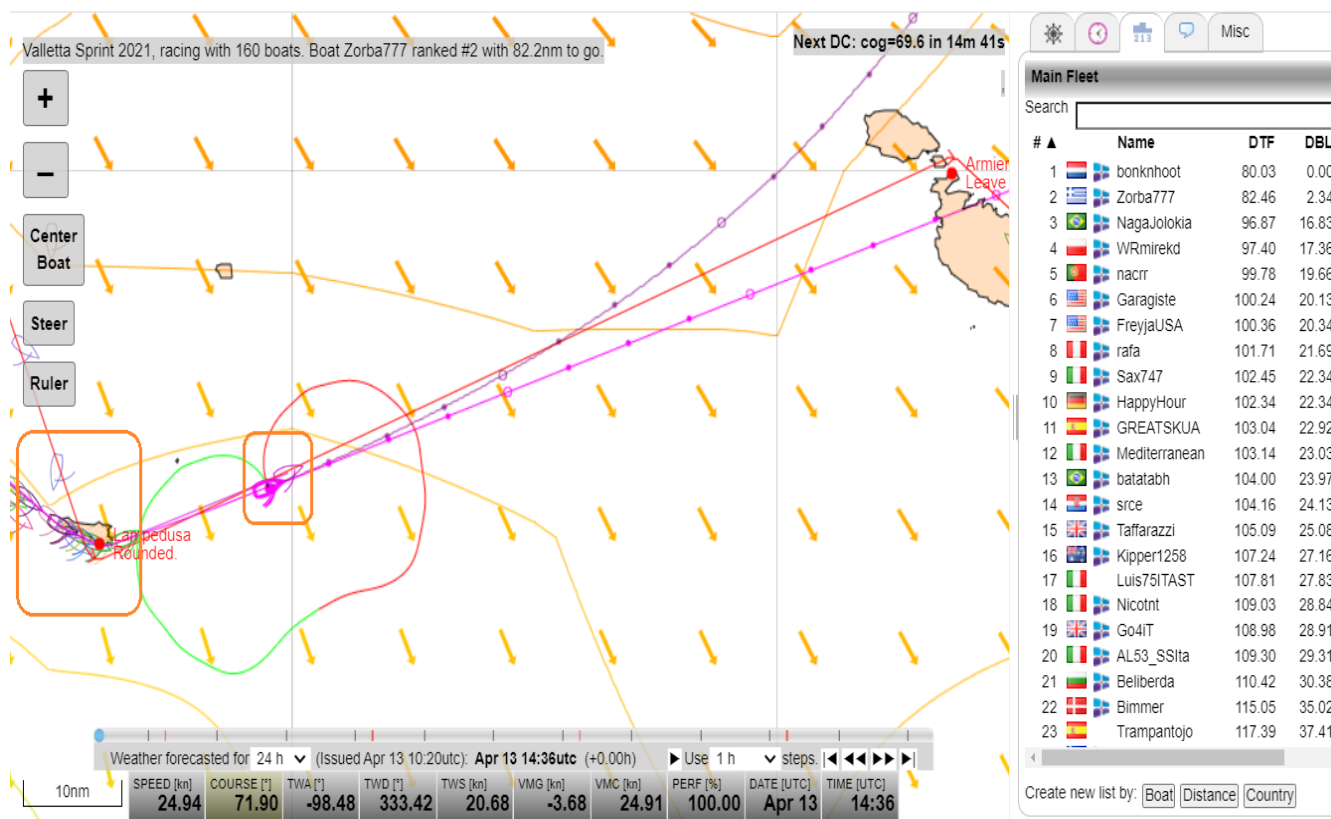
This was the starting point of a mad dash to the finish. Here we had 350 NM to go, rounding the islands of Favignana, Pantelleria and Lampedusa to get back to Malta. We would finish the race just before 1800 UTC, so we completed that stretch in less than 17 hours for a whopping average speed of over 20 kts.



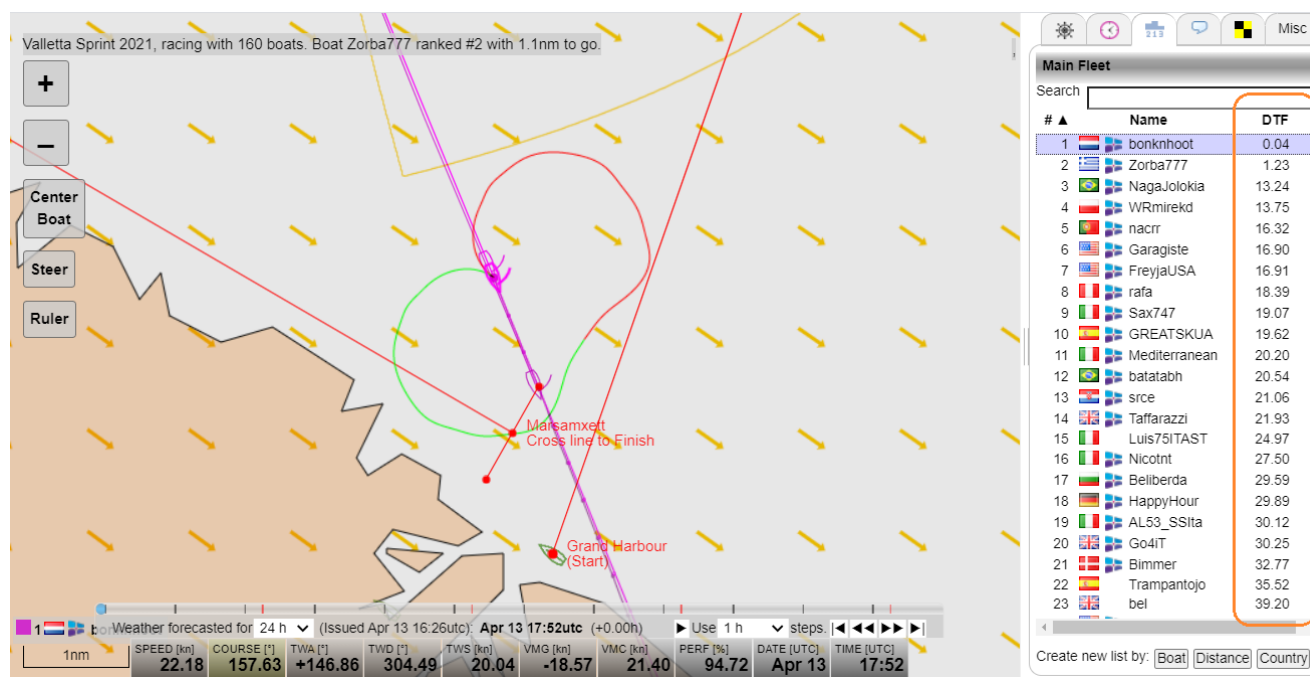
6 – Rushing to Favignana. More wind and good angle, always a lovely combination if you have catching up to do:



7 – A straightforward sail after Favignana gave many boats the time to catch up some sleep. In no time we were rounding Lampedusa and headed for Malta. Zorba777 was 5 minutes behind Bonknhoot, the main group is 40 minutes behind, where NagaJolokia has successfully kept a small lead on the rest of the group:










8 – Bonknhoot had a little slip-up in the final miles. A mystery gybe in the wrong direction cost him a few minutes. But he was at the helm to correct the error immediately. Why couldn't you bring in your IRL horses 15 minutes earlier, Jan? :-D  
Here is the photofinish, showing the distances to other boats:



9 – To conclude a little look at the total miles logged for the top boats. Bonknhoot sailed significantly more miles than anybody else. Proof that hard work is still rewarded on SOL planet.

And a special mention for @bel, who sailed the fewest miles of all boats in the top 25.



| #  | ▲   | Name          | DTF  | DBL  | LOG    |
|----|---|---------------|------|------|--------|
| 1  |    | bonknhoot     | 0.00 | 0.00 | 686.16 |
| 2  |    | Zorba777      | 0.00 | 0.00 | 677.12 |
| 3  |    | NagaJolokia   | 0.00 | 0.00 | 673.28 |
| 4  |    | WRmirekd      | 0.00 | 0.00 | 670.83 |
| 5  |    | nacrr         | 0.00 | 0.00 | 664.55 |
| 6  |    | FreyjaUSA     | 0.00 | 0.00 | 670.30 |
| 7  |    | Garagiste     | 0.00 | 0.00 | 671.00 |
| 8  |    | rafa          | 0.00 | 0.00 | 670.58 |
| 9  |    | Sax747        | 0.00 | 0.00 | 677.77 |
| 10 |    | GREATSKUA     | 0.00 | 0.00 | 667.74 |
| 11 |   | Mediterranean | 0.00 | 0.00 | 670.77 |
| 12 |  | srce          | 0.00 | 0.00 | 671.35 |
| 13 |  | batatabh      | 0.00 | 0.00 | 673.56 |
| 14 |  | Taffarazzi    | 0.00 | 0.00 | 672.59 |
| 15 |  | Luis75ITAST   | 0.00 | 0.00 | 668.95 |
| 16 |  | Nicotnt       | 0.00 | 0.00 | 666.22 |
| 17 |  | HappyHour     | 0.00 | 0.00 | 672.66 |
| 18 |  | AL53_SSIta    | 0.00 | 0.00 | 674.60 |
| 19 |  | Go4IT         | 0.00 | 0.00 | 676.90 |
| 20 |  | Bimmer        | 0.00 | 0.00 | 667.67 |
| 21 |  | Beliberda     | 0.00 | 0.00 | 668.40 |
| 22 |  | bel           | 0.00 | 0.00 | 659.74 |
| 23 |  | sailj29       | 0.00 | 0.00 | 663.90 |
| 24 |  | armenistis    | 0.00 | 0.00 | 670.72 |

Create new list by:

Congrats to Bonknhoot for great win and NagaJolokia a good 3<sup>rd</sup> in difficult conditions. Breakaways work once in a while, and it can encourage other SOLers to take a chance when they see one: “sometimes you take it on the chin, and sometimes you take the win” (copyright Zorba :) Thanks to all for a fun race and see you next time.

Zorba777