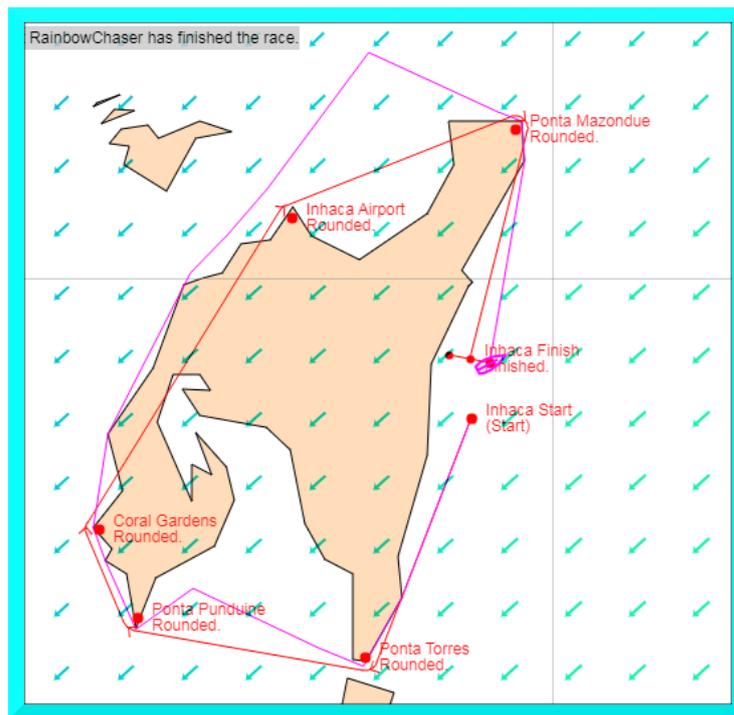
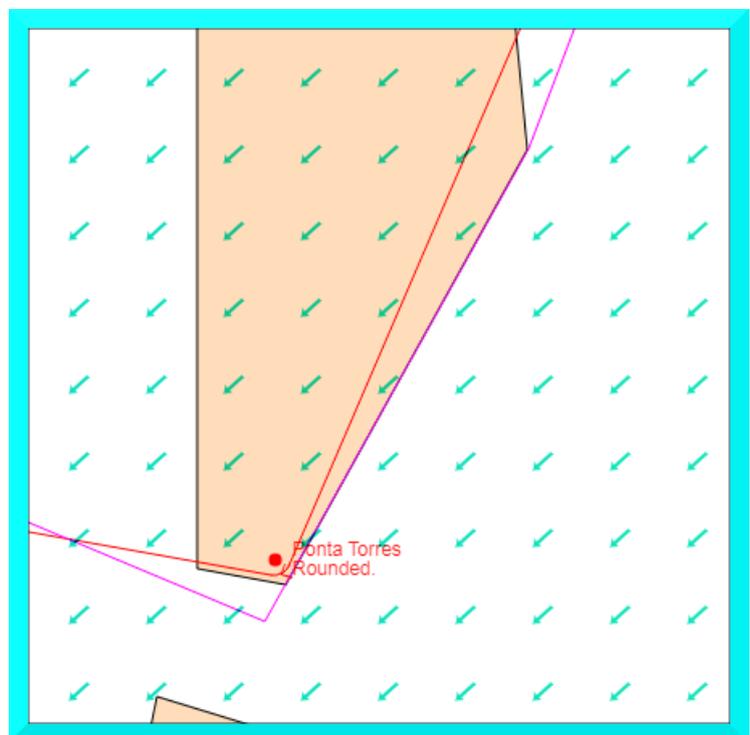


Inhaca Sprint 2021



SOL Boat Rainbow Chaser has been racing on Sailonline since 2009. Starting as a (mostly) landlubber with a fairly haphazard approach to virtual sailing, particularly after a short stint racing on VR, the boat had random successes – chief being to develop an awareness of how to sail a wind shift – and failures – chief being to fail to skilfully sail a wind shift! Years of Sailonline Admin-ing later, too many practice races to recall, results for RainbowChaser remain whimsical. Fortunately her skipper is a resilient sort and doesn't give up, but recognises that playing a significant part in the running of Sailonline, with few competent hours a day available due medical issues, means that racing consistently well is just not possible! Every new sprint in a good-for-RainbowChaser timezone is met with the same sense of optimism that “this could be the one” but, time and again something interferes and, with no real sense of loss, being skippered mostly by hand, the boat can be found arriving at the finish somewhere in the middle of the fleet. BUT the Inhaca Sprint of 2021 was different.

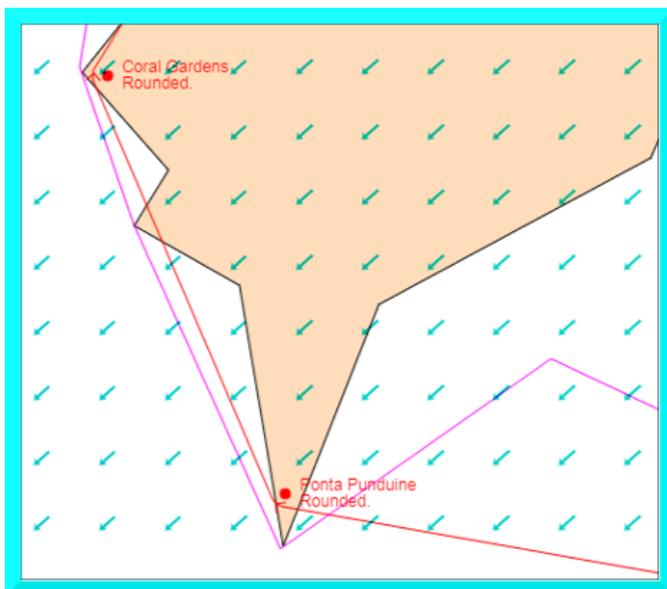
From the start RainbowChaser's skipper was feeling sharp, the hand tremor that usually prevents an accurate first course to be set, so that each turn requires several course corrections with their accompanying performance loss, was missing and in the knowledge that the sprint could be finished within a reasonable few hours, all boded well. Finding RainbowChaser in #1 there was a sense of “here we go again” as so



Inhaca Sprint 2021

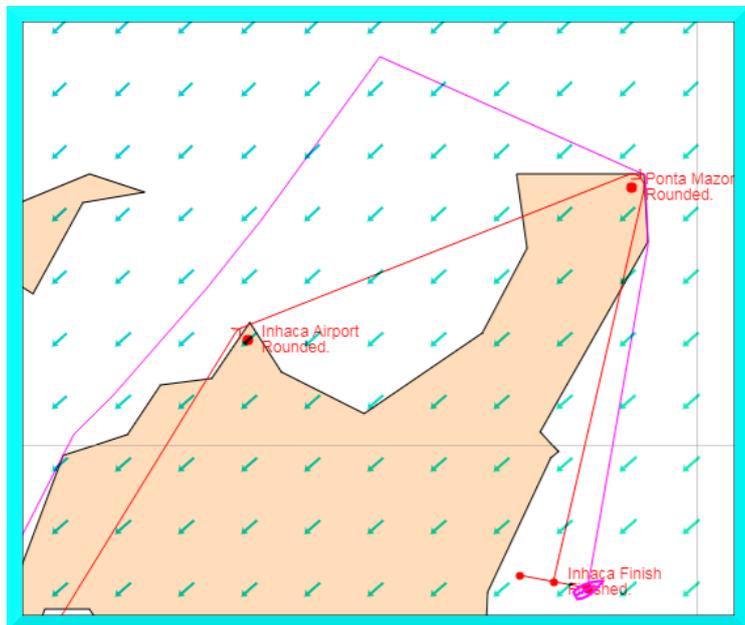
often her skipper makes a good start but, just look at that coast-hugging! It is only at Max Zoom (the friend for all racers) that there is a clear distinction between RainbowChaser's track and the coastline. There was some hesitation felt about the rounding, but deciding to go with the wind, after passing the mark RainbowChaser headed WNW and wondered what others would be doing. It seemed quite a few were following suit so, reassured that the right decision was made, the second mark was approached with a few to minimising perf loss.

Literally sailing on Max Zoom, with the occasional zoom-out and sliding of the wx slider to be sure that in the time remaining the wind shift was remaining subtle, the rounding at the second mark at Ponta Punduine was approached carefully and, as luck would have it, the timing of the turn was reasonable – not perfect, as you can see from the track in the image, but good enough. Having always wondered what it might feel like to lead a Sailonline race for more than a wee while, usually just seconds, there was a growing sense of “how am I going to stay here”, particularly after a swift glance at the boatlist revealed many top SOLers were in the mix. The wind was making some signs of shifting but nothing too drastic or too challenging and the rounding at Coral Gardens was straightforward – a little overshoot but nothing of note and at this point it felt to RainbowChaser's skipper that she really should have more of a plan than simply sailing her own course! After all, other podium place takers talk about covering others but in a sprint that is, perhaps, just not possible. In any event there wasn't any spare brain!



Inhaca Sprint 2021

All continued well, so it seemed, until the third mark – a new course, best VMG, was laid in and the skipper's finger hovered over the Send button, hoping that tremor wouldn't issue the command too soon but, a still-absent tremor was not the problem. The corner was close, the wait for the



optimum send command seemed endless.

Seconds-counting continued, 30 seconds, 45 seconds, more than a minute – at this moment the dawning realisation that, for the first time in forever, the race screen had frozen due, undoubtedly, to a very very slow internet WiFi connection.

Screen refresh.

A real grump at the sight of RainbowChaser now well past the turn, a sullen sending of the command and a recognition that, as always, RainbowChaser's skipper would be a good

sport, race as well as possible but probably end back in the 30th position where she now was. A G&T was definitely in order, so a TWA was set for the turn down to Ponta Mazondue, and RainbowChaser's skipper headed for the kitchen, the ice bucket and her favourite glass. There was ample time before the next turn and, it would be fun to see who could be secretly match-raced against on the run to the finish. C'est la vie would be the tone to adopt.

BUT what a delightful and unexpected surprise was to follow – on return to laptop, RainbowChaser was at 20th, then 17th, then 7th and by the time Ponta Mazondue was reached, #1 again! The rest, as they say in storybooks, is history. The lead of 0.2nm was maintained, despite changes in the following fleet, and RainbowChaser arrived 13s ahead of jhk1980, who was 8s ahead of Smo!

Race chat filled with compliments and congratulations from so many SOLers who had, over the years and more recently, supported RainbowChaser, whether as Admins, Practice Racing chums or sailing "consultants" (sailing the shift remains a bit of a mystery!) – it was truly a fun, happy and delightful experience. Hopefully, to be repeated before another decade elapses!

Joanne/RainbowChaser
April 2021