

## ***Finland-Sweden Archipelago Raid 2021***

The ability to laugh in the face of sleep ... was an advantage and all the routing software you can find ... QT, Predictor, Kroppyer, BrainAid, AG and SoTP.

Every race I start with some rules of things NOT to do. Sail the min distance, don't pinch (sail too close to the wind), try not to come into a mark by slowing down, don't pinch, don't change your mind last minute and finally don't pinch. I think this Italia 14.98 is a very smart looking boat but not too good at changing direction quickly, so the least number of tacks and gybes possible, performance loss at each one. That rule went straight out the window.

### **The Start**

DC's loaded until we turn East thanks to QT. 5 mins in, junk DC's, that's not the quickest route. Close to the front, keeping an eye on WSguerin taking a short cut. Approaching are the first set of TNT's (Trickey Narrow Trenches) slide around them like a dog on lino and away. At Dragedet come in from the wrong angle, lose speed and get slaughtered by a host of others, lost 10 places maybe more. Another rule broken.

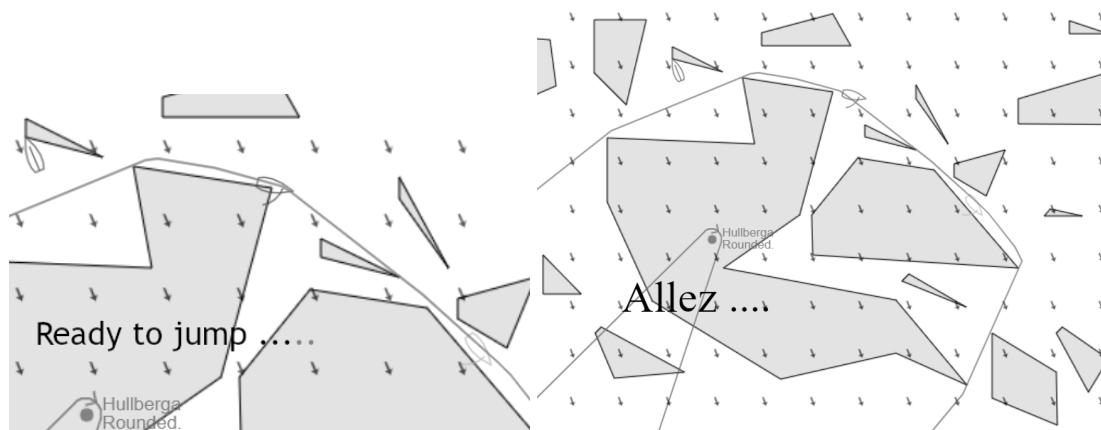
Its then a case of shortest route and VMG to the bottom mark, Orno West. I round it surrounded by the "US Baltic Fleet", seven of them! but I've made places up, some big names BBQ on the way. Sleep was calling. Choice of 3 routes. The best route is the one RAFA and CLOUDDANCER are taking, to the west and to windward but too many SLI for my DC's to cope with. I DC up the middle channel with the predictor and go to bed. 80 mins later I'm back, can't sleep and now cursing I'm too far to leeward and I should have not gone to bed. I look at RAFA 51 degrees to the wind against my 40 and at least 1knt faster, hardly any SLI in front of him. That's the last we will see of him, he's gone I thought. Got to distance "The Fleet", I know ... I'll pinch a bit. It paid off and to celebrate I rounded the mark at Stora Vanskar so wide I couldn't see it ! Now down to 4 of us battling out of Swedish waters.

### **Finland**

We lost, I think it was LITTLESUPRISE coming out of Sweden with RAFA approx 1.7nm in front of me and CLOUDDANCER (CD) about 0.5nm behind me. The gaps constantly yo-yo until the beat after Sottunga South. I need to eat and a G&T so set some DC's to take me out to the East and more breeze. RAFA and CD however sneakily, yes sneakily, play the shifts and SLI dodge to take a huge chunk out of me. When I return RAFA has gone and CD is closer as well. So now comes the first big call for me. Just lost 0.5nm or more, there may be a chance of gaining some back before Hullberga but I'm not sure and don't have enough time to do the what-if's so I follow. It's better to not lose any more ground as in 2-3 hours I will need sleep and have to trust 4 hours of DC's - my DC's are rubbish and RAFA might be awake ... I know I'm going to lose ground there so let's not lose any more.

### **Hullberga**

The comedy moment of the race. It looks just like an old PC game where the mouse has to jump off the cliff and land on the slope.



### Enklinge (The run)

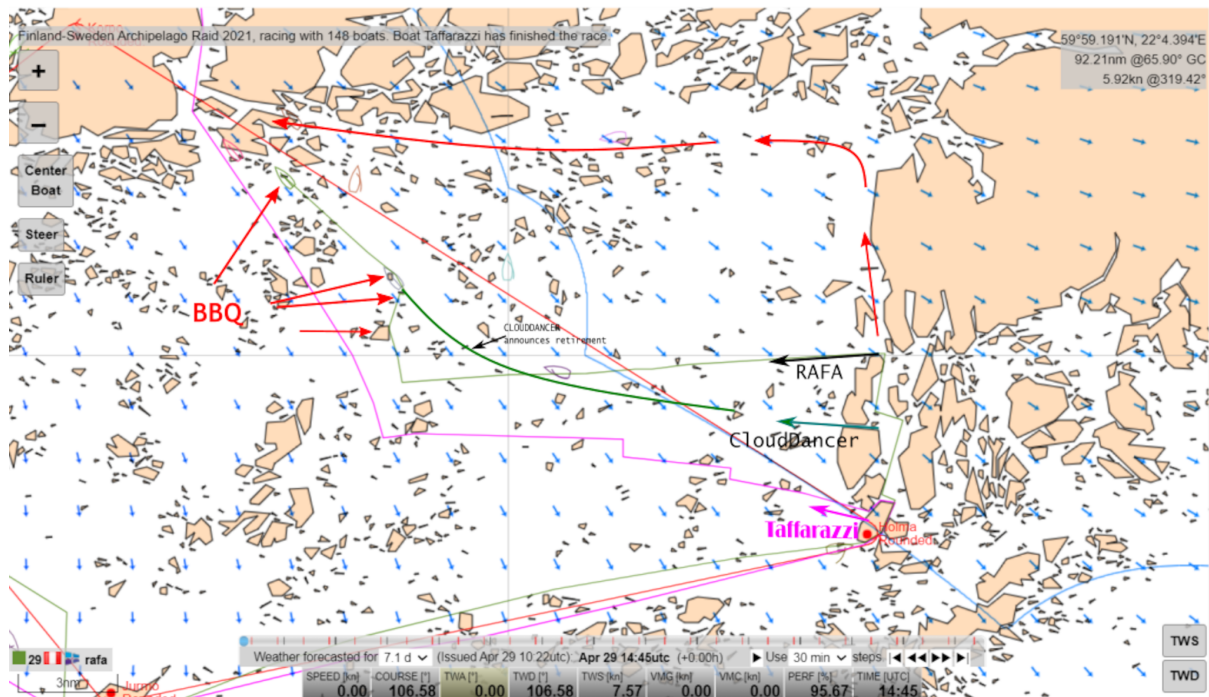
I need sleep, I need DC's in a hurry for the run down to Jurmo. Don't let me down QT .... it did. 15 mins later I go to bed. RAFA and CD are already going in a different direction to me so, brilliant, losing time already and it's just the start.

Alarm goes off, I'm so pleased ... I've worked the alarm ! Not so pleased when I get to my screen ..... I'm still going and just coming up to the final DC... looks good for the gybe. The bad news is RAFA is 5 miles ahead !!! and CD is to leeward and moving at 400mph just over a mile ahead. CD is not gybing, DC has overshoot and BBQ on Stora Sundskar. After the gybe the distances sort themselves out and RAFA is 3.9 nm and CD rescues his boat and is now about 2nm behind me. RAFA is taking a northerly route to Holma to avoid the SLI but the faster course is through those so now is the time to not follow. 0.3nm the gain by Holma.

### Holma - TNT central

This was always the key rounding for me and which course you took afterwards but first negotiate the TNT into the small bay then pick a TNT out. I decided the most southerly before the start as there are fewer SLI to the West. So I watch RAFA but he goes North and continues to go North. CD also goes North, paranoia sets in. "Why North?"

I'm using the "Draw a grib reconning" tool in QT to try and map a way through the islands but "Why are they going North?" I zoom out and I can see an almost SLI free path to Korpo. Its a continuation of the beat North the due West as a reach. It's a bit too much on the layline for me. Back to my Grib tool and in frustration I click and hold down the "Increase crank" button and the tack started North and then curved Westerly, it curved and straightened right to the point I had targeted for tacking to Korpo. Two tacks to clear all those SLI what a wind shift 90+ in an instant. So why does the track not show this? I changed my mind just before the 1st tack mind just before the 1st tack. The predictor showed I could do it in one with a bit of weaving.

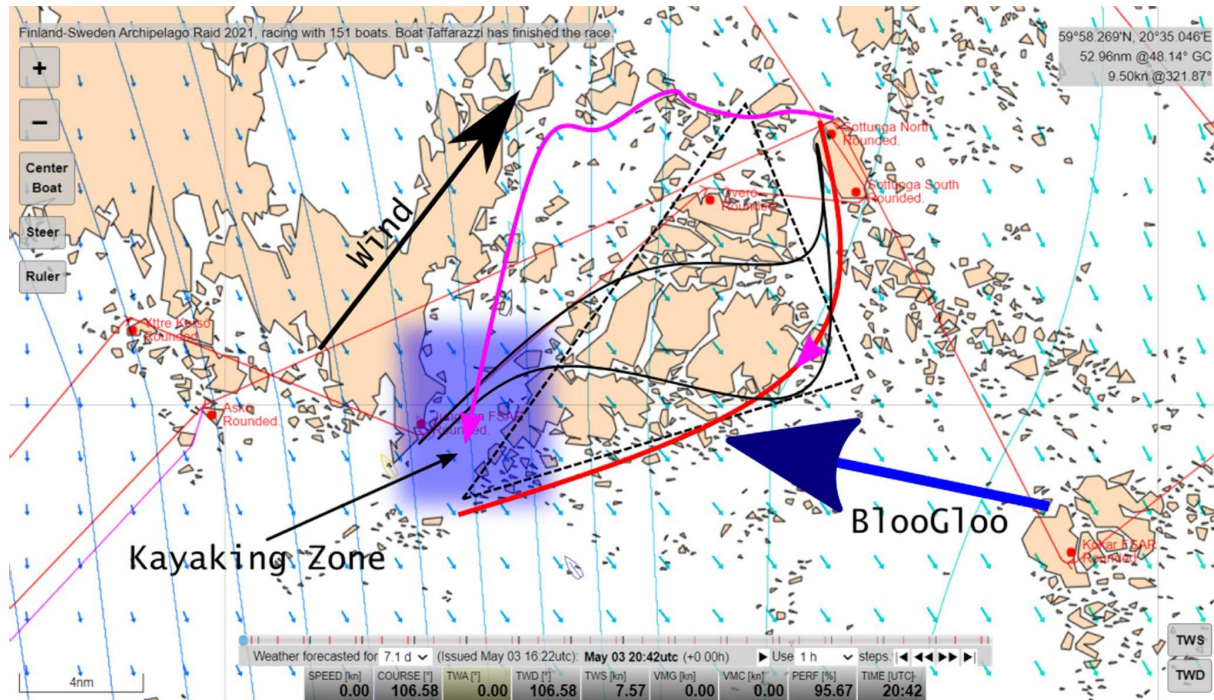


So using the predictor I wanted to check if a more Northerly route and a bit freer angle was quicker but I forgot to tick "Delay command" and tacked ... instantly. The rest of the trace is the struggle to make the new course work before giving up and heading North and then West.

Meanwhile RAFA tacks to the West at the top TNT and is moving like a train. He's sailing at 51 degrees and 2.5 Knots faster than me but QT's AIS is telling me that we will be 777m apart in 77mins. Where had the 3nm gone? CD was taking an age to appear from the middle TNT. Everybody heads West, RAFA tacks North, too soon I thought and then CD announces in Chat that CD is quitting, has to go, real life has played its trump card. Sad that CD had to break off but RAFA has BBQ'd !!!!, the first of 3 and then a few minutes later CD BBQ's. I'm out front but ... I don't know the way ! So the TNT at the top of Korpo, set up DC's with predictor. The closer I get the more the predictor bounces up down left right, its like a ball bearing in a blender! First 2 tack's are good, the 3rd one got to be good if not better. Ahhaatishooo ... "click" yep I sneezed and reflex clicked the mouse button ...Awesome! next 2 have to be brilliant, losing ground, The last tack was on the money. Run QT to see which way is best for Kokar. It highlights 2 corridors and with a bit of sidestepping (bearing away and pinching) can make it in 4 tacks. Any tacking to the west will have me going into the groups of SLI's and more risk of BBQ.

## Sottunga North

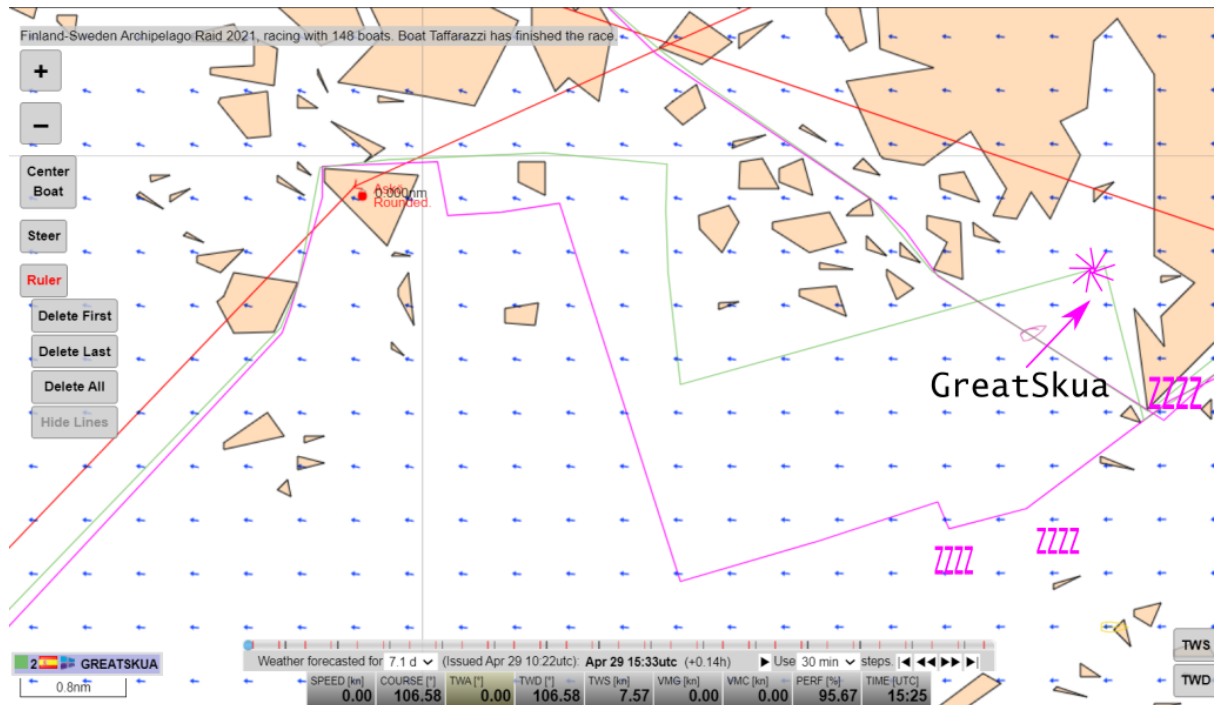
Get to Kokar and then its a reach to Sottunga North, nobody will make much of an inroad into the lead, lot's of SLI's to dodge. Set DC's and plan Sottunga to the end. Run QT to Jungfrun. From Sottunga its West, tacking along the top and then a long tack south with some little westerly tacks thrown in. Wrong!! didn't change the time. Its run for now and not an hour+,. Where is that BlooGloo going to be? Answer, right at Jungfrun ... Awesome.



Run again with correct time entered and am routed differently, what!? Zoom out and notice that the large group of islands in the middle form a right angled triangle. Is this a bit of course building genius ? I am tempted by the 2 reaches. Every time I run QT I get a different result but none involve going to windward. They go via the channels in the middle of the islands, each time I run it a different channel. The BlooGloo where from? South Eastish moving North Eastish. The 2 reaches are out and I commit to as far North and as far West. GREATSKUA is now about 2.9nm before we start. Just before the Southerly tack he's made 0.3nm up. South tack is good a straight line to within touching distance of Jungfrun (if you have long arms). A bit of pinching at the end to clear some SLI's (OK a lot of pinching) but through and into the 0.5knt breeze. The followers are in no better positions, they are to the North side of the center of the BlooGloo and I'm to the South. I measure the distance, it's still around 2.7nm. I run QT to Asko, its a 134 to the breeze and then gybe North. I fail to set these as DC's, relax and fall asleep. I wake up, check QT and notice I'm off course, make the change and fall asleep again. Fortunately my partner cannot sleep, wakes me with a cup of tea. Check QT again, even more off course. Where is GREATSKUA?!? check the leaderboard. He's 0.49 behind .... 0.49!!!!!! (An awful lot of swearing occurred next readers) Panic, IRL what do you do? .... cover! Bosh gybe North .... Why are you going to cover GREATSKUA I ask myself? What are you going to do? Luff him? Put him in your wind shadow? Its not real, he'll just laugh at you. Run QT, says gybe back and go North, like I told you too.



The passage North takes forever but I think GREATSKUA's progress was taking forever times 2. Made it to Asko, went as high as I dared and across the sea to Sweden. Put in the DC's for the finish line and went to bed.



Dragged out of bed and everything was as I'd left it. GREATSKUA about 2.7nm behind, round the last mark avoid the SLI's and a very kind uncomplicated course to the finish.

There were nearly always DC's loaded, I just monitored them and when I dozed off they saved me. Thank you to the predictor tool without that I could not have done this. QT? I used for the longer legs just to check I was going in the correct side but it was mostly used with AG to monitor other boats. Speed, heading and making sure I was as fast or faster over the ground.

